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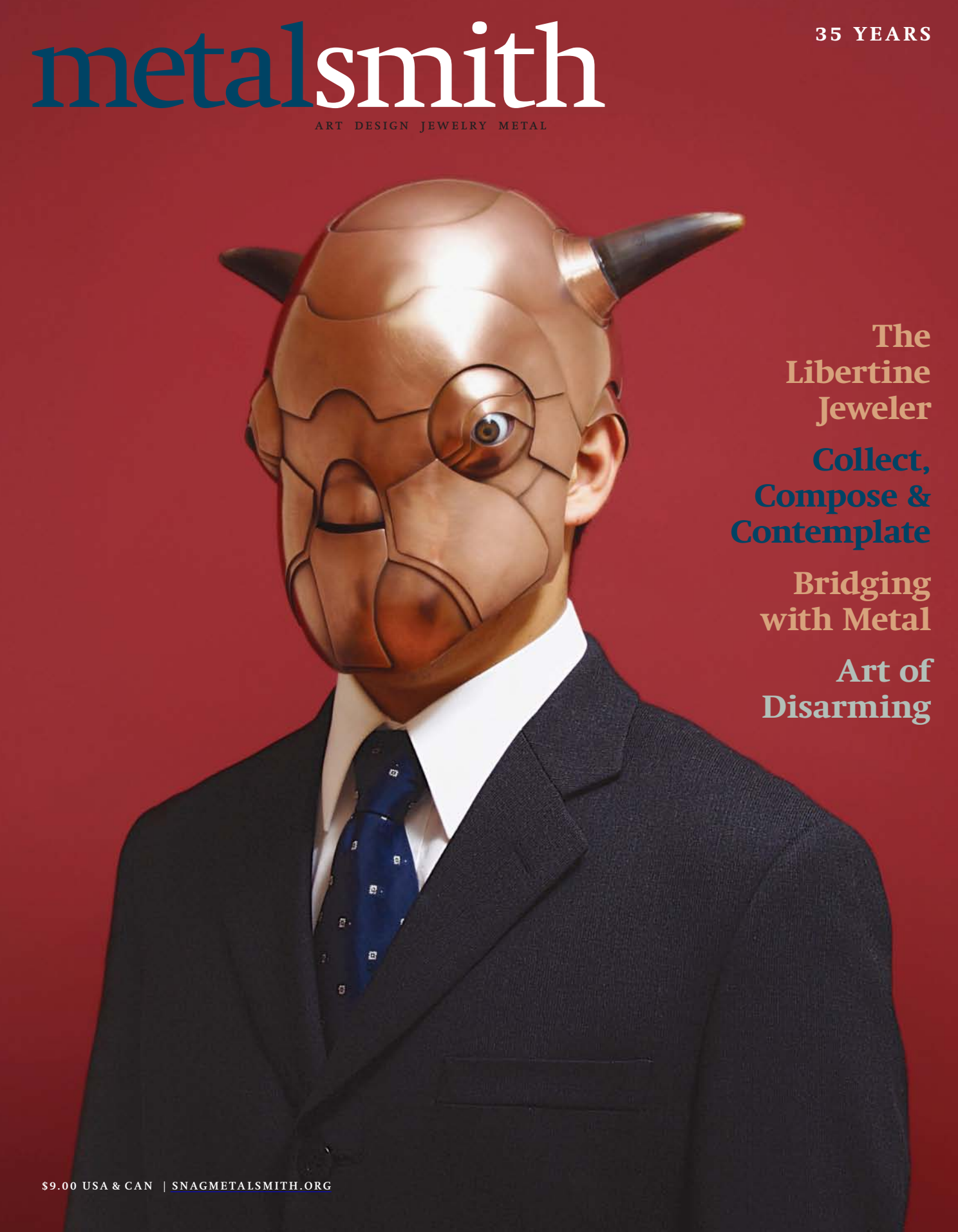

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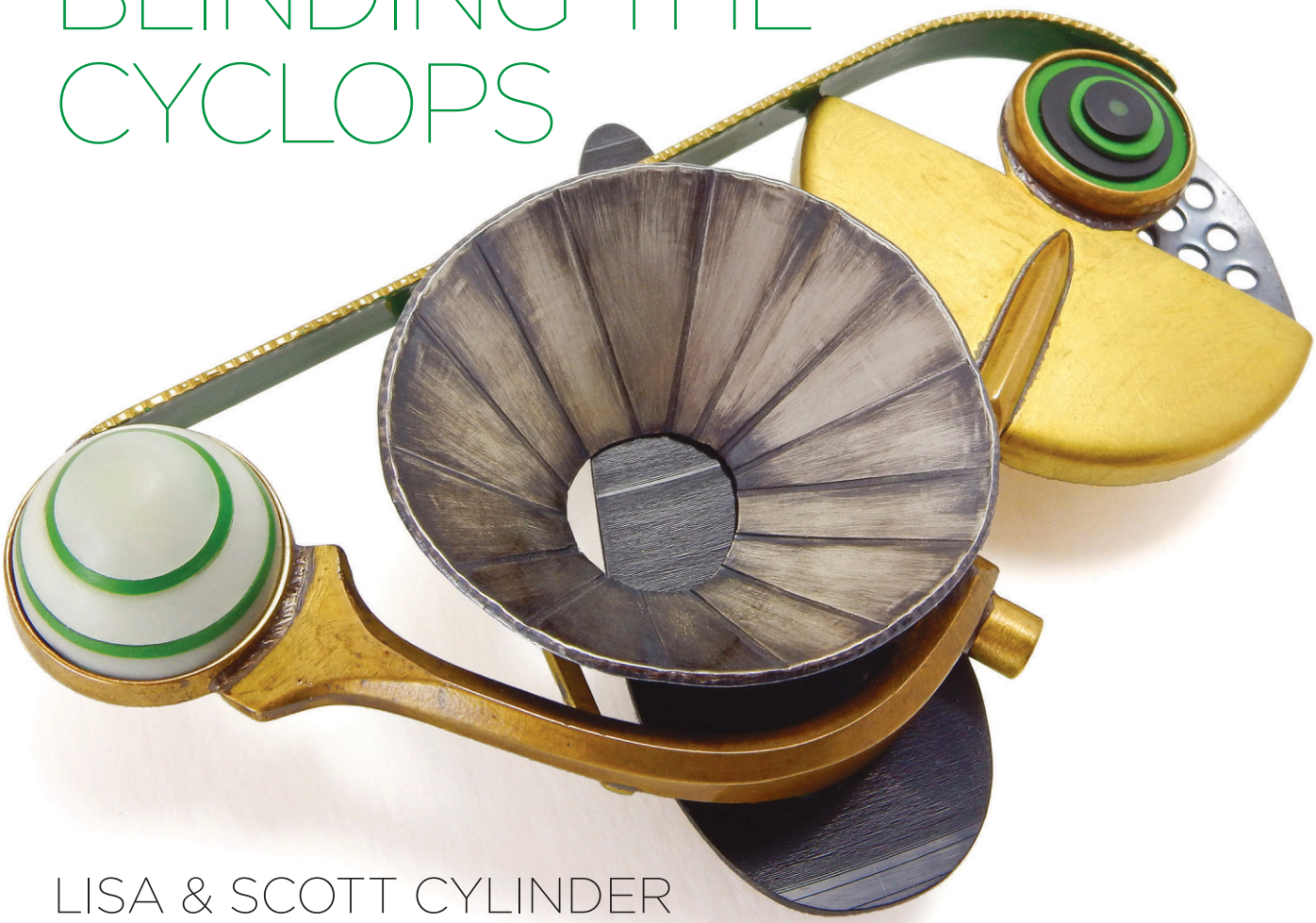

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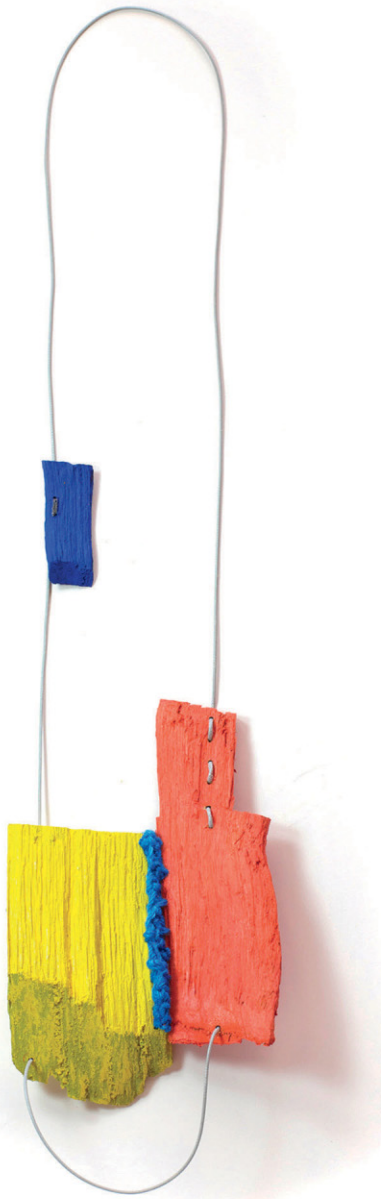

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FOREWORD

IS ART TRULY a universal language that bridges all cultural differences? This oft-expressed notion is explored in this issue of *Metalsmith*, which reveals that people of divergent backgrounds can indeed gain new understanding from the charged experience that art provides, whether through creative collaboration or empathetic appreciation.

A potent and poignant instance of such bonding is recounted in *Treasures from the Land of Sheba: Regional Yemeni Jewelry*, a book reviewed by Toni Greenbaum. The now war-torn region of Yemen has a history of creative coexistence between Muslims and Jews, wherein Jewish smiths made amulets for both Muslim and Jewish women, a practice fueled by the belief that interfaith exchange enhanced the talisman's power. As Greenbaum writes, "The story of Arabs and Jews united in a joint cause is epitomized by the history of Yemeni jewelry," in itself a powerful reminder that cooperation and camaraderie, built on common artistic effort, are genuinely possible.

The career of featured artist Komelia Okim also offers a case study in bridging cultures through art. Though Korean born, Okim has long resided in the United States, where she has been a passionate advocate for cross-cultural exchange in the metal arts, coordinating workshops, seminars, and exhibitions of Korean and international artists, while encouraging countless students to study abroad. Okim's recent work directly engages this cultural dualism through titles like *American Pear/Korean Pear* and *Human Connection through Art and Culture*.

Our feature article "To See and Be Seen: The Art of Disarming," surveys contemporary works that address the dynamic of shielding and revealing, protecting and exposing. According to writer Kim Cridler, "The threat that many artists respond to when borrowing the language of armor is the threat of not being seen, of not being recognized for who one is, of not belonging." Within this social battleground of invisibility and misrecognition, bravery becomes redefined in terms of openness and vulnerability. As Cridler states, "The courageous work of warriors today is to allow oneself to see and be seen with empathy."

Whether or not art can be called a universal language, it is surely a formidable cultural force, with unrivalled power to move, disarm, and unite us. And those who are fortunate to be in art's line of fire have the best chance of securing lives of harmony and shared beauty.

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

The mission of *Metalsmith* magazine is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalsmithing. In fulfillment of the goal of producing a significant document of the field, editorial content will emphasize contemporary activities and ideas, with supportive content to include relevant historical work and critical issues.

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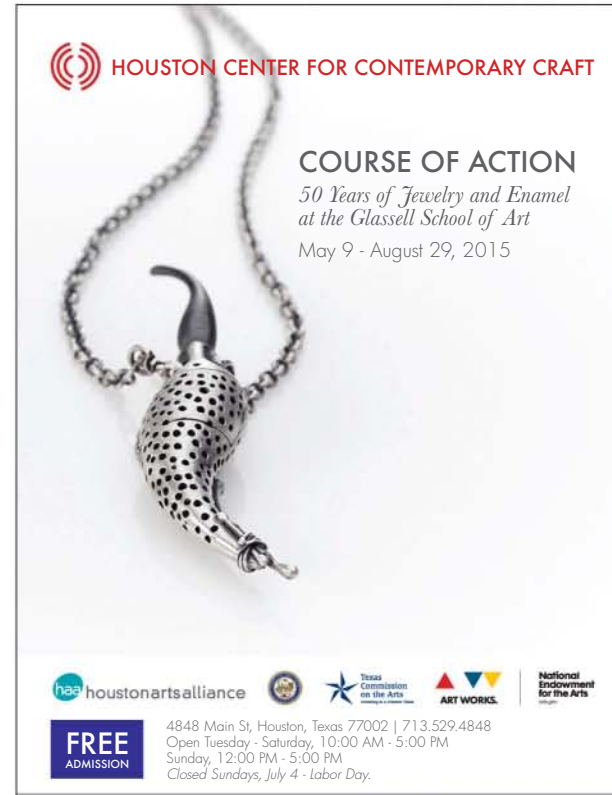

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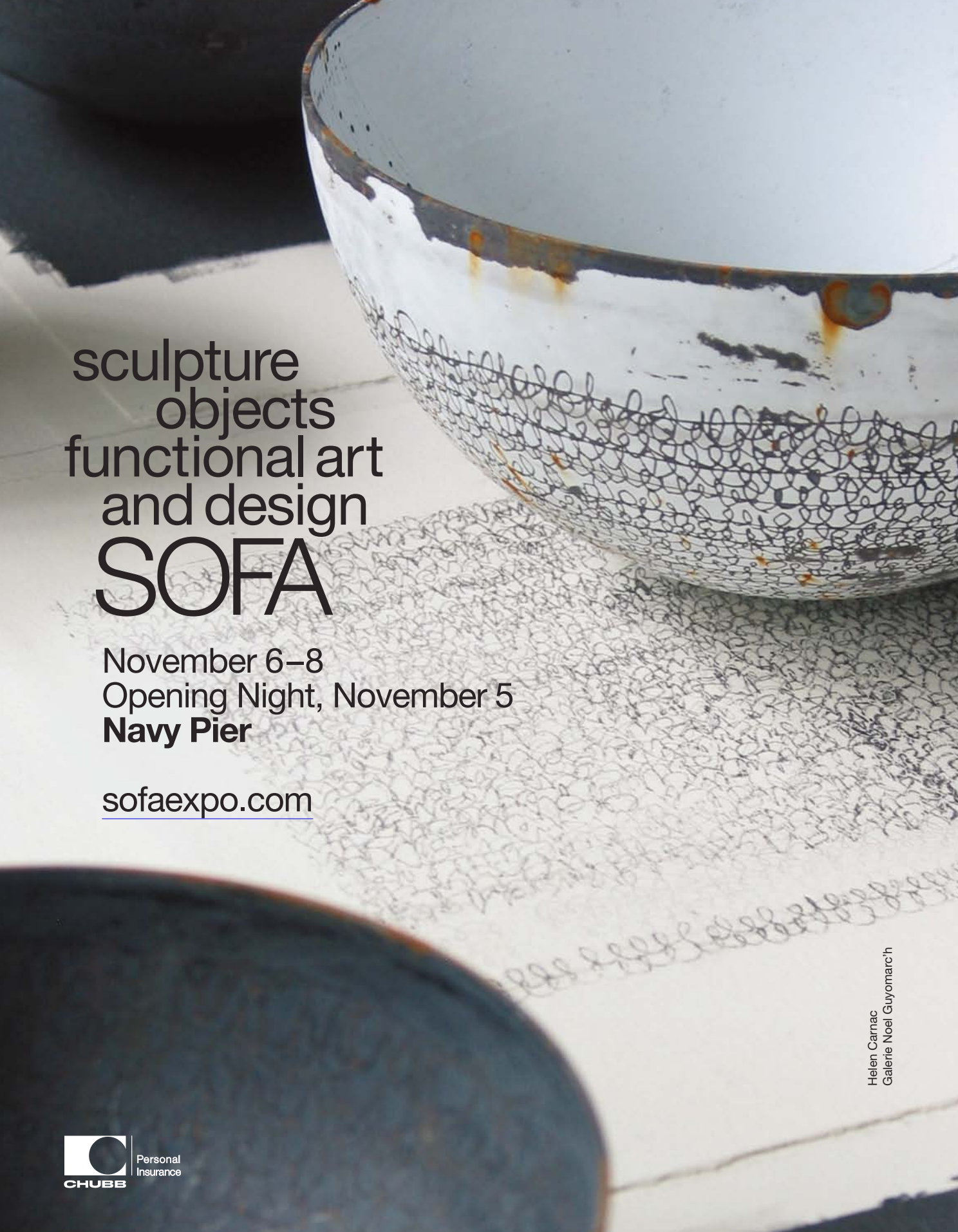

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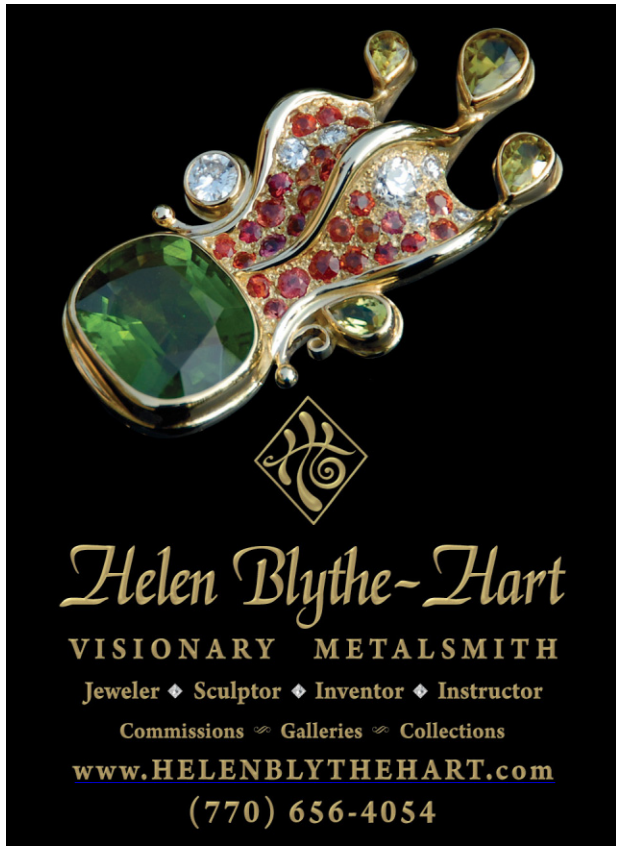

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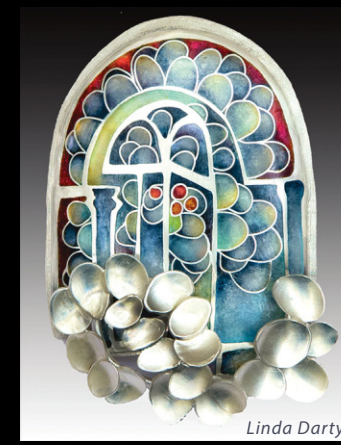
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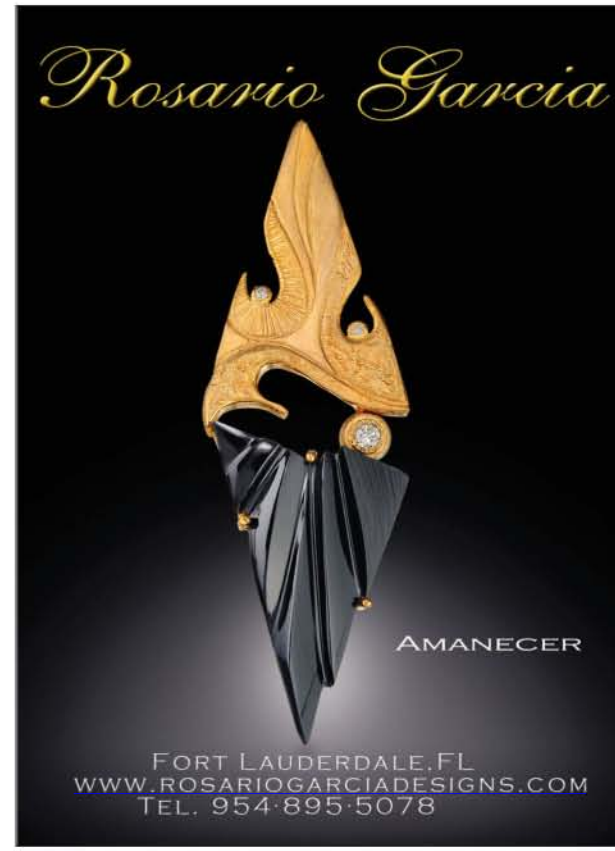

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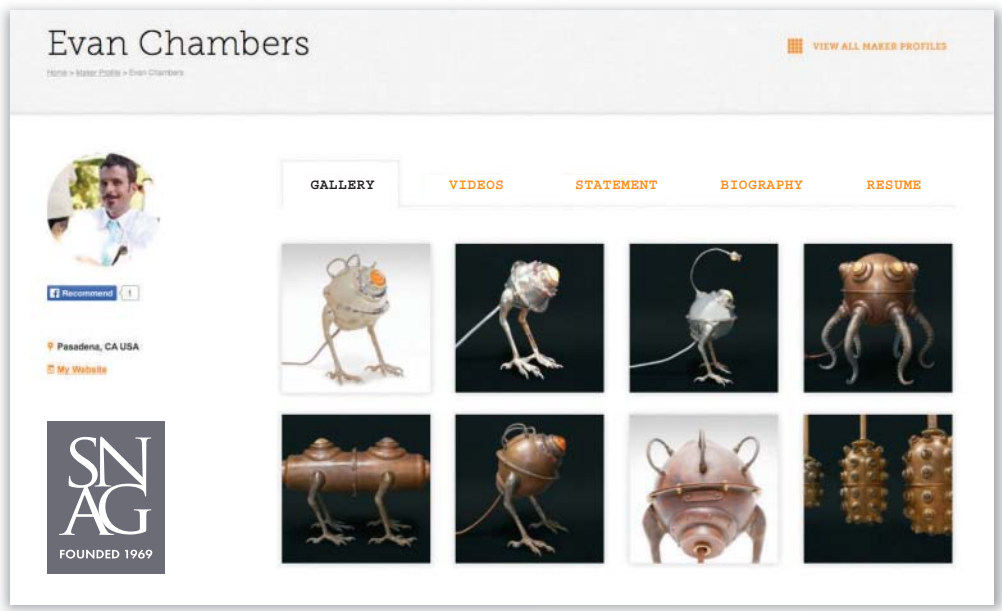

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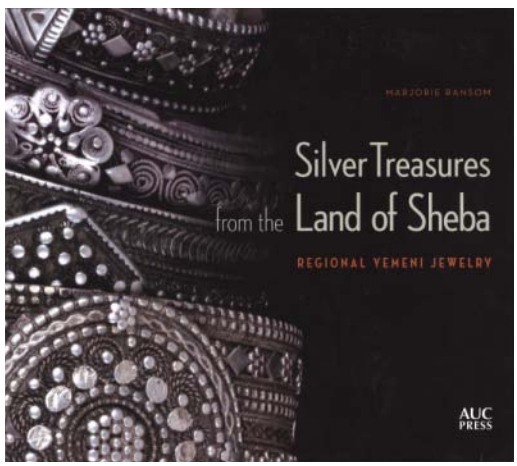
Silver Treasures from the Land of Sheba: Regional Yemeni Jewelry

BY MARJORIE RANSOM
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO PRESS, 2014
BY TONI GREENBAUM

THIS AESTHETICALLY PLEASING and factually informative book left me both elated and saddened. Author Marjorie Ransom does an admirable job of conveying the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Yemen, but the country is beset by harsh political challenges as the poorest of Middle Eastern countries. Along with a distinctive architecture and dramatic terrain, Yemen once enjoyed a notable jewelry tradition that was shared by both Muslims and Jews. Much of the jewelry from the 19th until the mid-20th century was made by Jewish smiths for Muslim as well as Jewish women, with only slight stylistic modifications as dictated by religious persuasion and talismanic properties. In fact, the owners would often wear each other's amulets, because they believed the protective power was enhanced by interfaith exchange. To this day, silver dealers are proud if they have *shughl yahudi* (Jewish work) to offer.

The camaraderie demonstrated by these singular practices makes the bitter reality of current Arab-Israeli conflict that much more demoralizing. Amiable codependence was the norm until the Jewish exodus to Palestine—begun in the late 19th century—burgeoned in 1948, with the newly formed state of Israel, and, again, in 1967, following the Six-Day War. When the celebrated Bezalel School of Art and Crafts (now Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design) was founded in Jerusalem by Lithuanian émigré Boris Schatz in 1906, the silver studio included Yemeni smiths, most prominently Yichya Yemini (1896–1983), thereby contributing to an Israeli national style derived in large measure from traditional Yemeni designs.



Ransom, a retired U.S. Department of State cultural attaché posted to the Middle East, began collecting traditional silver jewelry from the region during her initial trip there on a study grant in 1960.

Ransom wrote this book to chronicle what she fears to be an art facing extinction.

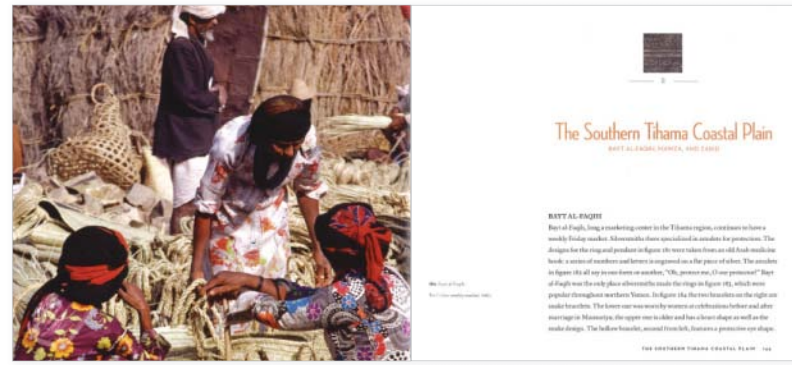
Her first piece was a large, sonorous bracelet purchased in Damascus at the Hamadiya bazaar in the old city. Her late husband, David, shared her passion for the jewelry. During tenures in Saudi Arabia, in the late 1960s, and in Yemen, in 1966 and 1975, they began to collect in earnest. To date, the Ransom collection numbers 1,900 pieces. This book, replete with charming anecdotes, was supported by a grant Ransom received from the American Institute for Yemeni Studies to document the traditional silver jewelry of Yemen. Between 2004 and 2007, she made several trips there—even while a devastating civil war raged—totaling a solid year of field research. Through breathtaking landscape photographs, taken by Ransom herself, as well as others, and augmented by sumptuous images of individual jewels by photographer Robert K. Liu, she paints a vivid picture of this diverse region which is home to city, tribal, and nomadic peoples, and where the detailed Islamic architecture of the capital, Sanaa, along with the mud-brick "skyscrapers" of the southern governorates, evoke fabled Arabic locales.

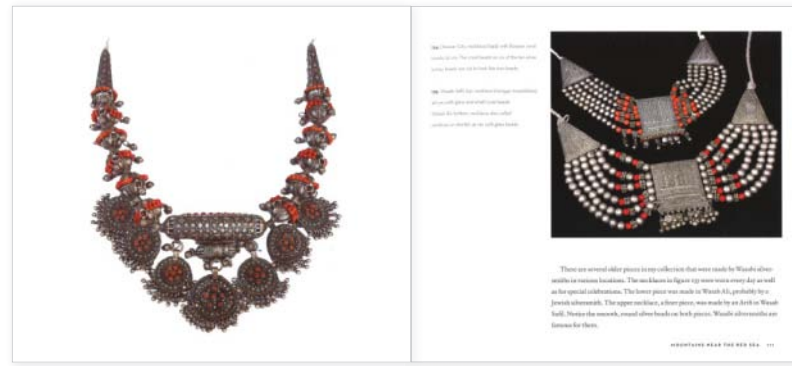
Along with the terrain, the cultural vernacular across Yemen differs markedly from region to region. The intrepid Ransom traveled into secluded areas seeking metalsmiths, women who still possess traditional silver jewelry, and their stories. Typically acquired upon marriage, jewelry is an essential aspect of ceremonial ritual as well as a display of family wealth. Bridal jewelry provides financial security for a Yemeni female, remaining her personal property until she dies, when it is sold (sometimes to partially pay for her funeral), and melted down, as new brides desire their own pieces. Fortunately, Ransom managed to convince several women—some now quite elderly—to be photographed dressed in their bridal finery, despite the usual reluctance by Yemeni women to have their pictures taken. These records of dignified and alluring women are some of the most poignant aspects of the book. In addition to jewelry, Ransom provides beautiful

illustrations of garments, like the jewelry photographed by Liu. She offers telling images of tribes people and Bedouins, mostly women, arrayed in local costume. The intricate embroidery on dresses, practiced with technical virtuosity throughout the country, is particularly engaging. And habitually worn with the clothing are masses of necklaces, bracelets, rings, headpieces, and earrings, often photographed together with the garments.

Yemen is bordered by Saudi Arabia in the north, and Oman to the east, and is situated across the Gulf of Aden from Somalia. Consequently, for centuries, it was a prime trade route, and the jewelry exhibits predictable cross-fertilization. Due to the second Ottoman occupation (1876–1918), output from the north shows Turkish influences, while that of the south (which "looks" eastward) incorporates Indian. There is evidence of actual Indian silversmiths working in Zaydiya, a small city near al-Dhahiyy in Tihama, as well as Wadi Masila, an area in eastern Hadramaut. Among the most characteristic motifs of Yemeni jewelry were those developed by two great Jewish silversmiths working in Sanaa: Harun Bawsani (1890–1949), whose jewelry is defined by delicate filigree, and Yahya Badihi (dates unknown), famous for dense granulation. Both engendered stylistic "schools," and early examples of each have been among the pieces most coveted by collectors. Hadramaut gave rise to its own distinguished styles, typified by elegant chasing, foliate piercing, and sinuous "loop-in-loop" chains, incidentally made by women.

Ransom wrote this book (and plans a second volume specifically about the makers—Muslim and Jewish) to chronicle what she fears to be an art facing extinction. Today young Yemeni women opt for gold rather than silver jewelry, and tourism, which would partially support such indigenous activities, is practically nonexistent. Kamal Rubaih, a dear friend of Ransom's, is a purveyor of antique and newly made Yemeni silver jewelry. He has a shop in the Suq al-Fidhdha (silver market) in Sanaa that he calls "World Friend," a most fitting name for a business run by such an endearing man. Rubaih, along with other Yemeni dealers and silversmiths, remains a beacon in the Middle East. And the story of Arabs and Jews united in a joint cause is epitomized by the history of Yemeni jewelry. In these perilous times of acrimonious misunderstanding, we must emphasize our commonalities rather than differences. The cooperation depicted in *Silver Treasures from the Land of Sheba: Regional Yemeni Jewelry* is an apt place to start.





Toni Greenbaum is a Brooklyn-based art historian specializing in 20th- and 21st-century jewelry and metalwork.

Eric Silva
Crafting an Identity

BY BRETT LEVINE

Untitled (necklace), 2014
antler, sterling silver, labradorite, chalcedony, chrysoprase, blue quartz
length 20"
PHOTO: JUAN PAZOS

Untitled (bracelet), 2014
titanium, antler, garnets, copper, sterling silver
2 ½ x 7"
PHOTO: JUAN PAZOS

FROM THE OUTSIDE

Eric Silva's studio space is nondescript, which is apt, given that his work is about confounding perception. Set in a garage attached to a house, the studio's interior is light-filled, with glass expanses opening onto the backyard. Worn and patinaed wooden worktables and repurposed file cabinets are loaded with works that are in the process of conception, creation, and fabrication.

For Silva, the journey from understanding craftsmanship to expressing creativity was far from normal. "I didn't start out the way a lot of jewelers do," Silva explains. From Norwalk, a predominantly Latino part of Los Angeles, his introduction to artisanship came at a young age when he encountered traditional stone carving at a craft show. By a "craft show," Silva continues, "I mean people making the figures you expect – small animals like birds and bears, working with gemstones. This is where I learned my trade." Nevertheless, he was hooked.

While Silva has taken a few jewelry classes to refine his technical abilities, in general he is self-taught. "At first I just loved the idea of making," says Silva. "Then I became very interested in the idea of working on a very small scale in a very detailed way. I didn't really have any formal training at the time, but I found a book on netsuke carving which was extraordinarily influential." Silva became fascinated with the idea that the objects he was creating could contain the elements of a narrative. This commitment led him to an concentrated period of studio practice in which he developed, defined, and refined his craft. For nine years he worked intensively, without participating in a single exhibition. "I was a UPS loader at the time. I worked the early shift, so I had studio time for the rest of the day. I probably made 2,000 pieces in the process, and I gave almost every one of them away."

As Silva became more confident in his abilities, his work also became more conceptual. At first he constructed shadow boxes that contained three-dimensional imagery, but he came to feel that they were "too digestible as still just an image inside a container." Then, he continues, "I became fascinated with how the shape of a piece occupied space, and what its relationship with the body might be."

In the process of acquiring greater technical skill, Silva decided that "every time I felt too comfortable with making a piece, I would force myself to move on to making something else." Keeping his works accessible to a wide audience was a constant, however, and he chose his materials for their affordability. Two of these non-precious materials are natural horn and bone. "As a child I spent a lot of summers at home watching the National Geographic channel," he explains. "On the Discovery Channel one summer there was a program about an Inuit boy who was making bone spearheads. I was fascinated." Silva didn't appreciate how much that show had influenced him as a jeweler until he held his first piece of antler. "It simply wasn't something I had really considered using because you didn't see a lot of it in urban LA," he says.

It is the specific qualities of antler, horn, and bone that Silva finds so intriguing. "I realized that in some instances it was almost as if they would carve and polish at the same time," he remarks. "It creates the need to be very careful and considerate as you work. I was fortunate to have some mentors in the Native American community, which helped me both understand the physical qualities of the materials and a way to approach making these singular works."

Silva regards his studio practice as the opportunity to share his creativity with a wider audience. "I begin every piece

"Every time I felt too comfortable with making a piece, I would force myself to move on to making something else."

Jeweler Eric Silva in his Los Angeles studio
PHOTO: JUAN PAZOS

Work table in Eric Silva's studio
PHOTO: JUAN PAZOS

with the idea that it is a one-of-a-kind work. Although I do have a line of production pieces," he continues, "I always start from the perspective that the work is about the object first, how it relates to the body, and how it fits within the wider context of my work. I don't, for example, like to design a bracelet and a necklace that are supposed to be worn together. I see each as its own object."

Silva is, however, fascinated with how his production pieces can inform his studio practice. "As someone who began by working in a market environment, I learned very quickly that it is a great environment to see how a piece of jewelry actually works. Is it easy to put on? How do people wear it? How does it really fit the body?"

Perhaps Silva's biggest challenge, as he explains it, is simply "getting started. I work in the studio every day. When I carve, it is almost meditative." Silva continues to extend himself, testing his technical and conceptual capabilities and limits. "At the moment, one of the ideas I am really interested in considering is the question of what jewelry really is. I think a lot of people ask this question, and I think the answer lies in the ability to continue to be creative."

Brett Levine is a writer, curator and doctoral candidate.

Celestial Adornment

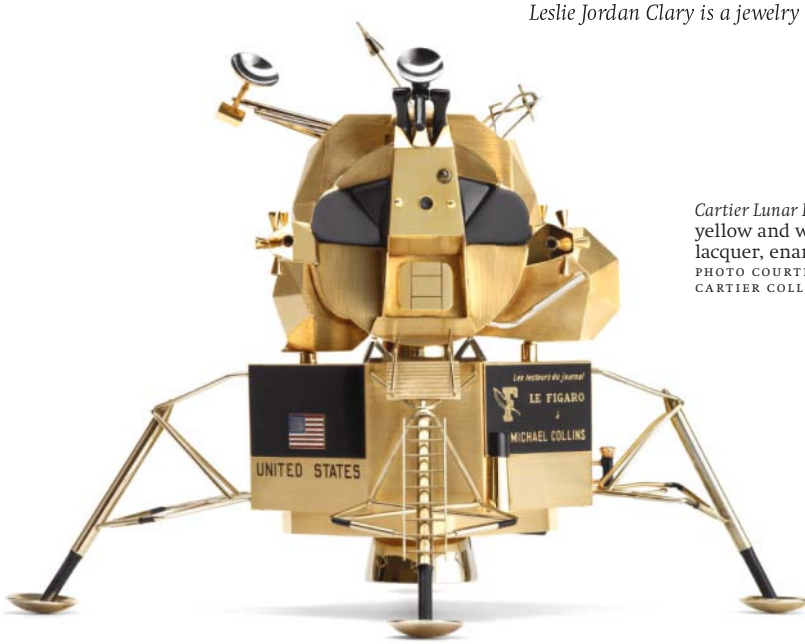
BY LESLIE JORDAN CLARY

LAST SUMMER, WHILE visiting my home state of Ohio, I discovered Cleveland-based jewelry designer Michelle Pajak-Reynolds. I was captivated by the flowing tassels of her "Hypatia" collection, a series of pieces inspired by an ancient female astronomer. As I have long been enthralled with the moon and stars, I wondered how many other metalsmiths and jewelry artists have also been inspired by them. I came to learn that it is quite a common subject. Whether through symbolic representation or the use of actual celestial objects, the unfathomable heavens have long captivated the human imagination.

Archeological digs have uncovered ornaments crafted into planets and stars. A scarab in one of King Tut's necklaces is made from Libyan desert glass, thought to be a meteoritic material. During the late 19th century, Halley's Comet jewelry was all the rage, and many brooches in that period were fashioned into colorful comets. Newer materials such as titanium and polymer, created to serve the space program, have brought further innovation to jewelry design.

A wonderful selection of celestial jewels can be seen in Los Angeles's Griffith Observatory, in their "Cosmic Connection" jewelry exhibit. And last year The Forbes Galleries in New York showed "Out of this World: Jewelry in the Space Age," an exhibition that will travel to several U.S. cities in 2015. The pieces that I chose to showcase here reveal the vast ways the heavens have both directly and indirectly inspired jewelry designers.

Leslie Jordan Clary is a jewelry and gem writer who lives near Reno, Nevada.



Cartier Lunar Landing Module, 1969
yellow and white gold, black lacquer, enamels
PHOTO COURTESY NILS HERMANN, CARTIER COLLECTION

WALLACE CHAN
Ring Mon Reve (ring), 2014
titanium, green tourmaline rubellite, green tourmaline, diamond, tsavorite garnet, pink sapphire, lapis lazuli

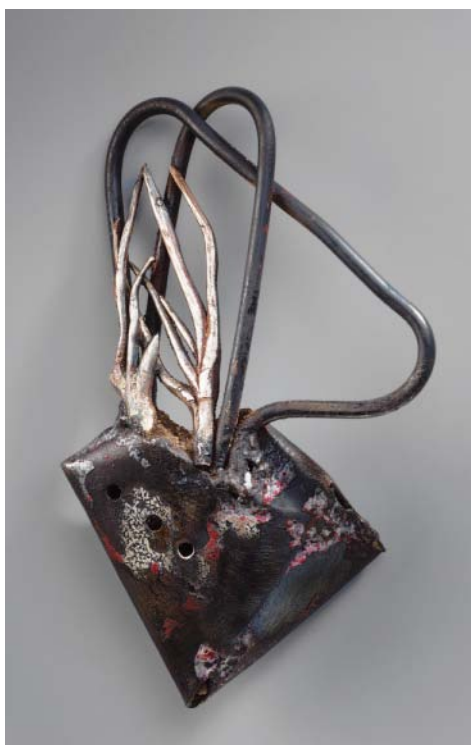
LINDA ROUX
Saturnalia, 2014
Herkimer diamond, agate, mystic pyrite, vintage chandelier glass, gold-filled and gold vermeil beads; gold-filled chain and clasp
length 21"
PHOTO: LINDA ROUX

MICHELLE PAJAK-REYNOLDS
Nimbus, from "Hypatia" collection, 2014
sterling silver, pyrite, glass beads
necklace 18"
PHOTO: JULIE STANLEY

Comet Brooch, vintage, n.d.
From "Cosmic Connection" exhibition at Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles
PHOTO: RON MERLO

ANGELA TÖLKEN
Momentary Unison (brooch), 2007–08
sterling silver, 18k yellow gold
width 2 ⅛"
PHOTO: ANGELA®, 2008

LORENA LAZARD
Origen 02 (brooch), 2014
iron, pure silver, enamel, soil,
polymer clay
4 x 2⅜ x ¾"
PHOTO: PAOLO GORI



EZRA SATOK-WOLMAN
Quasar, brooch, 2014
18k white gold, 19k yellow
gold, Tahitian pearl,
natural pink diamonds
diameter 2 ¼"
PHOTO: EZRA SATOK-WOLMAN

REINHOLD ZIEGLER
Weathered fusion crusted meteorite,
2014

ARATA FUCHI
Heliopause 2, 2013
sterling silver, silver powder, gold, fine silver, oidized shakudo
1 5/8 x 1 1/2 x 7/8"
PHOTO: ARATA FUCHI

PALLAVI GANDHI
Under the Night Sky brooch, 2014
sterling silver, cubic zirconia
3 x 1 3/4"
PHOTO: PANKAJ MISHRA

Kathleen Dustin
Feats of Clay

BY ANDREA DINOTO

"I WAS SHOCKED! I was totally thrilled!" recalls Kathleen Dustin on learning she'd been awarded Best in Show at last year's prestigious Smithsonian craft fair. Known for her botanically themed polymer clay creations—sculptural evening bags, jewelry, and objects—Dustin notes she that she had introduced two new bag lines at the show that marked a "drastic change" from her more flamboyant signature style. Oversized vividly painted flowers and pods were replaced by textured and layered forms she describes as "a more modern-art type of series, suitable for wearing to a gallery opening, perhaps, or a fine-craft show." But despite the accolades, Dustin understood that divergence from a familiar path is not necessarily good for business. "It's risky to change," she says, "because you may lose your following." On the other hand, she adds optimistically, "you may pick up a new following."

Kathleen Dustin (left) with client in her booth at Craft Boston, 2015

One practical consideration influencing her new handbag designs was the increased size of the latest iteration of smartphones. Larger molds were needed to accommodate the iPhone 6+ and other similarly scaled devices, and Dustin was quick to adapt.

Now in her third decade as a multimedia artist, Dustin reports business is thriving and that in 2014 her net income was "higher than it's ever been." Her success is no mere accident. "Having made a living for 30 years," she says, "I realize that perseverance is really important, especially through the low times, and also being willing to change." Dustin sells most of her work through fine craft shows, six or eight per year, and none of them outdoors. She's done the Smithsonian show a number of times, as well as the Philadelphia Museum of Art Contemporary Craft Show and Craft Boston. "A show gets you the retail price," she says, "while galleries are wholesale."

From the start, Dustin has understood the necessity of giving good service to customers and the value of making a personal connection. She never fails to write email thank-you notes that include something about every transaction. She has also been quick to embrace the power of the Internet and social media, and maintains a viable Web presence, both as artist and businessperson. With Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest accounts, she expresses dismay that "there are still craftsmen who do not have a website." Her own includes a design gallery and archive, a blog and a "shop" limited to affordable earrings: "You can never have too many earrings," she reasons, "and earrings always pay my expenses." E-sales are powered by Paypal, the popular online service that has broadened her retail business internationally.

Dustin's reach is further extended through the polymer clay workshops she teaches abroad about twice a year. Trips have taken her from her home in rural New Hampshire to France, Germany, Italy, Malta, and Prague, and as far afield as Slovenia and Russia. Her students, she says, include lots of hobbyists, but also "semi-pros, all young and going to art school."

Since Dustin began working with polymer clay in the late '80s, she has seen the medium brought to a new level: "It's just blossoming all over the world." A self-described late bloomer, Dustin obtained an MFA in ceramics at age 29. Her grounding in the vessel form came into play when she switched to polymer

Konya Handbag, 2014
polymer, boar bristle
9 x 5 x 4"

Layered Fragments With Treasure (brooch), 2014
colored polymer, oxidized sterling, 22k gold leaf
4 x 3 x ¾"
PHOTO: VICTOR WOLANSKY

and found she could continue to make hollow forms—although ones you could carry. "Polymer, if conditioned and cured correctly, is quite flexible," Dustin explains, "not stiff and or brittle like ceramic clay." Thus, her striking bags, as well as her extravagant polymer and silver necklaces, are not as fragile as one might assume.

Dustin's own strength as a designer is demonstrated as well through the passion of her collectors, many of whom want to own one of everything she makes. In January 2014, she posted a sale on her website, which she announced on Facebook: half off or more on purses no longer in production. "I sold everything in 15 minutes," she reports; many pieces went to international clients. Dustin was delighted, although, she says, "I try not to do this [sale] as a regular thing." Business acumen aside, the essential reason for her success, Dustin believes, is that customers feel the very personal nature of the work. "I'm very proud of it," she says, "and most proud that I've been able to make a living at it."

"I realize that perseverance is really important, especially through the low times, and also being willing to change."

Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer on art, craft and design.

The Art of Disarming To See and Be Seen

BY KIM CRIDLER

JUNG-KI BEAK
Untitled (Vaseline Helmet and Gloves), 2007
C-print
50 x 33 ½"

PARKER BROWN
The Defense of Ignorance, 2009
steel, wood, brass, bronze, leather
18 x 16 x 10"

HYUNGKOO LEE
Self Portrait-H2, from
"The Objectuals" series, 2002
C-print
47 ¼ x 59"
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
AND GALLERY SKAPE

opposite:
HYUNGKOO LEE
Enlarging My Right Hand with Gauntlet 1,
from "The Objectuals" series, 2002
C-print
63 x 47 ¼"
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
AND GALLERY SKAPE

Turban Helmet, Iranian,
late 15th century
steel, engraved and damascened
with gold and silver
height 11 7/8"
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

JUAN PANTOJA DE LA CRUZ
Portrait of Charles V, 1608 (detail)
oil on canvas
PATRIMONIO NACIONAL,
REAL MONASTERIO DE SAN LORENZO
DE EL ESCORIAL

OVER DRINKS RECENTLY, a friend of mine jumped into a standing yoga pose and exclaimed, "You are a warrior!" She had misheard me. I had said I was a *worrier.* My fears are fed daily with news of climate change, genocide, religious fundamentalism, extreme weather, terrorism, rampant viruses, mass extinction, discrimination, breached privacy and a host of other threats. I try to control and predict, but defense is slippery work.

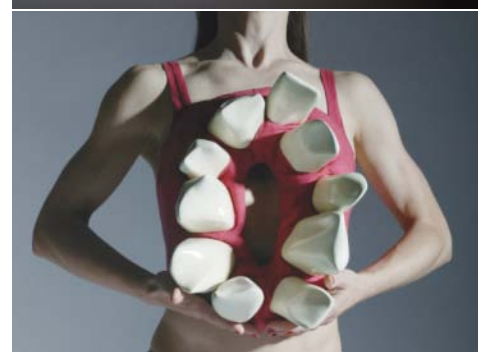
The natural desire to defend oneself both physically and psychically is as least as old as recorded history. Expressing human technological as well as cultural evolution, arms and armor have developed in unison, yielding skilled work in bone, hide, textiles, wood, leather and metal, and in time contributing to the Industrial Revolution and fields such as engineering and metallurgy. Early defensive armor of fabric and hide is so widely found that it cannot be pinned to any specific place or time,[1] but metal defenses have been used for more than 3,000 years.

The full harness of plate armor, associated with European knights of the Late Middle Ages, may be the most iconic form. Highly functional, technically sophisticated, and charged with symbolic power expressing the chivalric ideal, these works were "treasured among the aristocracy who held them among their most prized possessions, sometimes regarded as jewels."[2] A suit of armor dated 1544 for Charles V, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Spain, embodies this ethos through masterful workmanship and formal presence. Charles V commissioned armor from the German and Italian centers under his rule, which were "home to the leading workshops with the expertise to craft luxury arms but also those devoted to the mass production of armaments for war."[3] These works also symbolized the chivalric ideal, with its joint allegiance to the military, the nobility, and religion.

Of course, Christians were not alone in creating armor of great technical and symbolic sophistication. Using force to spread and defend religious teachings was seen as just by many religions. For example, Islamic "turban helmets" were recorded as early as the 14th century BC with matching mail-and-plate armor. These helmets provided physical as well as spiritual defense, their form charged with allegorical ornament such as fluting corresponding to specific turban folds, and damascened calligraphic inscriptions marking the wearer as a fighter in the Holy War.[4] Writes armor historian Helmut Nickel, "Militant from the very beginning, Islam promised its followers the delights of paradise as a reward for spreading the teachings of the Prophet with fire and sword."[5]

Armor came to fortify horses, ships, trains, and planes, evolving into armored tanks and personnel vehicles. Even the development of today's ballistic vests has historic roots, when famed 16th-century Milanese armorer Filippo Negroli was commissioned to create a bulletproof vest for the Italian mercenary Francesco Maria della Rovere.[6] Today's home front is equipped with modern body armor using synthetic fibers such as Kevlar or Spectra, supplemented by fiberglass, ceramic, or metal plates, worn by police, security staff, and the military. There is even a stylish jacket in development for women that shocks upon contact. Dubbed

CLARINA BEZZOLA
Root Helmet, 2008
C-print mounted under Plexiglas
23 ½ x 15 ¾"
PHOTOGRAPHY IN COLLABORATION WITH DAVID BYUN



CLARINA BEZZOLA
Tooth Vest, 2004
C-Print mounted under Plexiglas
30 x 21"
PHOTOGRAPHY IN COLLABORATION WITH DAVID BYUN

"exo-electric armor," the No-Contact Jacket emits audible crackling sounds from the visible electric arcs that crisscross the torso.[7]

A number of skilled makers are dedicated to keeping this ancient art form alive. Parker Brown is the sole proprietor of Crescent Moon Armoury, maker of custom reproductions using both contemporary and historic methods. Brown also serves as Apprentice Silversmith at the James Craig Silversmith Shop, Colonial Williamsburg. A keen student of history and a natural teacher, Brown shares his enthusiasm through online tutorials and articles on both the making and meaning of European medieval armor. A few of his pieces explore the conceptual ground beyond the formal and functional expectations of his clients. His work *The Defense of Ignorance* is a helmet based on a 14th-century Hounskull Bascinet. Brown's helmet omits the slits for sight or breath, however, suggesting the final outcome of total protection.

Despite such outliers, searching for protection through the work of today's smiths is enough to drive you back to museums. It is hard to make advances where there is little at stake. Creating reproductions for collectors and societies like the Association for Renaissance Martial Arts,[8] or trading in fantasy creations for movies and entertainment, cannot match an industry and art form that co-evolved with the history of warfare itself, was financed by kings, and was tooled to instill fear and righteousness. Made obsolete through its own evolution, armor lives as a symbolic ideal, occupying a place of power in fantasy reenactments, fashion, and the gaming world.

The threat that many artists respond to when borrowing the language of armor is the threat of not being seen.

The troubles of today have brought new meaning to notions of protection. First-world fears can be abstract and intangible. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety is the most common psychiatric complaint.[9] The threat that many artists respond to when borrowing the language of armor is the threat of not being seen, of not being recognized for who one is, of not belonging. Even historically, armor functioned beyond deflecting the physical arrows of an enemy. Armor covered and concealed; it disguised and altered. Like costumes or masks, it presented an imagined or constructed identity, promoting an idealized version of either an individual or a collective group.

The guise of anonymity works in darkness. It can result in the kind of offensive behavior seen in online chat rooms, or anonymous acts of violence like vandalism. Agents of authority such as the military or police depend on a collective mask of power that allows, and sometimes even forces, individuals to act in morally repugnant ways. But the twin of anonymity is the violence of not being seen. Individuals marginalized because of their ethnicity, their religion, their biology, their class, or their beliefs are not seen as whole people, and risk their lives for recognition.

The works of Korean artist Hyungkoo Lee distort and alter through rudimentary means. Begun in 1999 while Lee was studying in the US, "The Objectuals" series captures the feeling of being different, and the desire to change the self to survive in a new environment. These works take on the lure of science fiction with a provisional quality. Fashioned from lenses and PET bottles filled with water, they employ theatrical exaggeration with a bit of swagger. They suggest that act of being seen can feel like distortion, or that seeing oneself can be experimental.

Cloth is a cultured skin, allowing us to adapt to any environment. Works by Swiss sculptor and performance artist Clarina Bezzola use this familiar material to explore

CARRIE MAE ROSE
Wearable Weapons-Breastplate, 2011
TSA confiscated medical scissors, zip ties

NAIZA KHAN
Armour Lingerie IV
(edition of 3 works), 2007
galvanized steel
32 ¼ x 15 ¾ x 9 ½"
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ROSSI & ROSSI GALLERY

NAIZA KHAN
Armour Suit for Rani of Jhansi
(edition of 3 works), 2008
galvanized steel, feathers, leather
35 ½ x 17 ¾ x 13 ¾"
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ROSSI & ROSSI GALLERY

the desire for self-protection through stitched and padded protective devices. She observes, "We barricade ourselves behind elaborate defense mechanisms, which operate on physical as well as psychological levels."[10] Her *Tooth Vest* frames the torso with red satin and magnificent thrusting teeth, while exposing the wearer's soft center. *Root Helmet* operates as a disguise in reverse, transforming any person into their true and whole animal self. By covering the user's face (and its cultured expression) in soft folds of darkness, the helmet quiets the mind, and releases the body and its impulses back into nature. This work explores the self-censoring effect of judgment, and resonates with Einstein's observation that human consciousness is an "optical delusion" that separates us within the prison of our thoughts and feelings from the whole of the universe, our true home.[11]

After treating an old wound with Vaseline in winter months to keep his skin from splitting, Korean artist Jung Ki Beak cultivated this material to form ceremonial helmets, cuirass, and gauntlets of petroleum jelly to protect the head, chest and hands. An exploratory gesture both vulnerable and symbolic, it was intended to summon shamanistic-like relief for both the self and for societies cracking under environmental and social stress.[12] His earlier works of full helmets with horns related the evolution of animals with the business world. The competitive drive for domination expressed in ritualized business attire is as coded and determined as the teeth and swift hooves of predators and their prey. He notes, "When an animal is wounded, it becomes more violent and, consequently, more offensive. In my work, the symbol of these aggressive aptitudes is the horn."[13]

"We barricade ourselves behind elaborate defense mechanisms, which operate on physical as well as psychological levels."

The garment-like jewelry of artist and designer Carrie Mae Rose exposes an ambivalence about beauty and protection conveyed by the nuanced meanings of everyday objects. The artist writes that her work "was born out of her personal need to be safe enough to feel beautiful,"[14] suggesting the deeply conflicted human experience of allowing oneself to be seen. Her "Wearable Weapons" series includes draping neckpieces and large cuffs simply assembled from zip ties and masses of scissors confiscated in airport security by the TSA.

Artist Naiza Khan employs the armored female body to explore tensions of power, identity, and self-determination. Born in Pakistan and educated in the West, she has worked for more than 20 years in Karachi as an artist, art teacher, curator and activist. Her "Heavenly Ornament" series (2005–2008) was informed by visits to a factory producing protective garments for the military, as well as by a bulletproof jacket stored in her studio. Khan says these pieces "occupy a place between love and war, and are ambiguous in their position of aggression and seduction."[15]

The steel of Kahn's *Armour Lingerie IV* frames space for the soft flesh of breasts, while delineating what seems to be the swelling form of a pregnant belly. Finely dimpled by the blows of a forming hammer, the navel is defined, a reminder of blood passing from one body to another, a universal sign of our connectivity to the earth and to each other. This suit of armor descends into a short flowing skirt, with an open back fitted with utilitarian clasps. Made by Mohammad Kasim, a local blacksmith with whom Kahn collaborates, the workmanship is direct and unapologetic.[16] *Armour Suit for Rani of Jhansi* memorializes Lakshmbal, Queen of the Jhansi State of north-central India when it was seized by the British East Indian Company in 1853. She became a leading figure in the Indian Rebellion of 1857, and died on the battlefield dressed as a cavalry soldier. This suit of armor, like other works in Naiza's oeuvre, suggests vulnerability and strength, confinement and freedom, being seen and unseen, evoking the same mixed qualities of lingerie itself.

Within Muslim society, where women's freedom to be seen and heard has undergone reform efforts from British colonization to the more recent Zia regime's "roll back" of numerous rights for women previously enshrined in Pakistani law,[17] Khan's work takes on a pointed ambiguity. By depicting

ADEELA SULEMAN
Untitled 4 (Suicide Jacket with Lemon Tree), 2010
steel (ed. of 3)
65 x 25"
PHOTO COURTESY OF AICON GALLERY

ADEELA SULEMAN
Helmet with Screen, 2008
steel wok, steel tiffin box, foam, cloth
9 x 20 x 11"
PHOTO COURTESY OF AICON GALLERY

ADEELA SULEMAN
Mubarizun No More, Series 2, 2014
stainless steel
94 x 72"
PHOTO COURTESY OF AICON GALLERY

tensions of visibility and agency through western garments such as slips and chastity belts, rather than the Muslim hijab or veil, a garment intended to protect one's private life from outsiders, Khan exemplifies the complexity of protection. How do we protect? Who chooses? How does protection imprison or free those who are subject to its power?

Addressing the violence implied in armor itself is Adeela Suleman, also a resident of Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and former capital. The country's financial and cultural seat, Karachi is marked by political instability and an alarming level of violence, both religious and sectarian.[18] Suleman's early work relied on found objects, employing domestic utensils to create fantastic helmets alluding to heroic power, but also suggesting an urgency to arm oneself with the close at hand. *Helmet with Screen* fuses bowls, decorative chasing, and a tiffin, or lunch box. Comical and imaginative, like children playing dress-up, it is also a serious observation on efforts to conceal women, both chosen and socially determined. It also reworks an account of Margaret of Beverley, who fought in the Holy Land during the Third Crusade, wearing a helmet improvised from a metal cooking pot.

The courageous work of warriors today is to allow oneself to see and be seen with empathy.

More beautiful and troubling are Suleman's works in formed and chased steel depicting senseless acts of violence, framed by the abundant beauty of the natural world. Headless, handless fighters armored in traditional plate self-destruct in a decorative blaze, with petal-like spurts of blood, halos of spears, and heavenly wings. Another piece frames a suicide jacket with the sweet and bitter growth of a lemon tree, ripe with fruit, foliage, and birds. These works from her *Mubarizun No More* series refers to an elite unit of the Muslim army comprised of top warriors or champions who killed strategically to demoralize the enemy.[19] The warriors depicted in her works are anonymous, two-dimensional and out of reach. Stripped of their senses, they march headlong into the lush paradise they cannot perceive. Her use of symmetry and ornament suggests that valorizing violence through beauty or custom, law or religious righteousness, cannot cleanse acts of murder, torture, or terrorism from their root in oppression.

In this world of threats, both real and perceived, perhaps the most dangerous is this small fear that infiltrates the self, of not belonging, of not having a place of meaning and recognition. Humanity is a collective, and our ability to survive the ever-changing landscape of global threats is dependent more than ever on the actions of one another. The courageous work of warriors today is to allow oneself to see and be seen with empathy. Those denied this right will take to the streets, armed with whatever is found close at hand.

Kim Cridler is an artist and educator living in Michigan.

The Libertine Jewelry of Sophie Hanagarth

BY LIESBETH DEN BESTEN

Armor Breast (brooch), 1997
iron nails
3 ⅛ x ¾"
PHOTO: MICHEL AZOUS

Bretzel (Pretzel) Rings,
from "Serie-B," 2007
pure iron
4 x 2 ⅜ x ⅜"

above:
Armor Last and First Armor (hand objects), 1993
tin can
each approx 4 x 2 x 1"

Parasites (rings), 1994
iron, gold, medical bandage
each approx 2 x 1 ⅛"

SWISS JEWELER SOPHIE HANAGARTH'S claim that "the jewel is a very complete and very rich subject of study" is borne out by an examination of her own evocative work. Among the issues she addresses in her far-ranging jewelry are power, sexuality, and vanity. Working freely in various materials, she often makes variations on a theme in different jewelry modes.

Since 2000, Hanagarth (Lausanne, 1968) has lived and worked in Paris. Love was the main reason she moved to the city, but the adventure of a new environment certainly attracted her. "France was more like a jungle to do contemporary jewelry," she explains. Hanagarth started her jewelry career in a quite classical Swiss way in the late 1980s, by studying gemology in Idar-Oberstein. During her four-year apprenticeship afterwards with Pierre Bersier, she found she enjoyed the social side of the work of the craftsman-jeweler. Bersier used to have very long conversations with customers before he started sketching. In her view, "in this tension between expectations of the customer and the interpretations of the craftsman emerges a unique piece of jewelry, something you can't repeat." Once past the door of the workshop, as if by magic, the customer "feels like the author of his new purchase." At Bersier's studio Hanagarth also learned to handle tools, techniques, and materials, but in the meantime she was looking toward the contemporary. She knew there were schools where one could learn jewelry in a more experimental vein.

In 1992, after four years of manipulating noble, expensive materials and precious stones, Hanagarth was admitted at the Academy of Decorative Arts in Geneva, where she became a student at the jewelry department. The contrast to her former training was immense. "The education centered on research, freedom of expression, and innovation," Hanagarth says. "It was an answer to my doubts about the value of materials and the notion of preciousness. But in the beginning it was difficult to open up my mind and start working without knowing where to go. Today I like that way of working a lot." Even though the education had a rather classical basis, with courses in anatomy drawing, space, and perspective, professor Esther Brinkmann turned it into a dynamic program.[1] Hanagarth recalls the projects, exhibitions, visiting artists, and the dinners in Esther's studio for informal presentations of jewelry.

Through a workshop by Wilhelm Tasso Mattar, Hanagarth began developing a rather narrative way of working in which she felt comfortable. By using tin sheet, she was able to realize hollow objects, inspired by gas cylinders found in the street. These cylinders reminded her of human forms, and armed soldiers. The transformation from a utilitarian object into a personal statement felt like a revelation, says Hanagarth. "After this, my work

changed. It was the first time I was able to express myself with symbols." She continued to work in this vein until graduating from the academy.

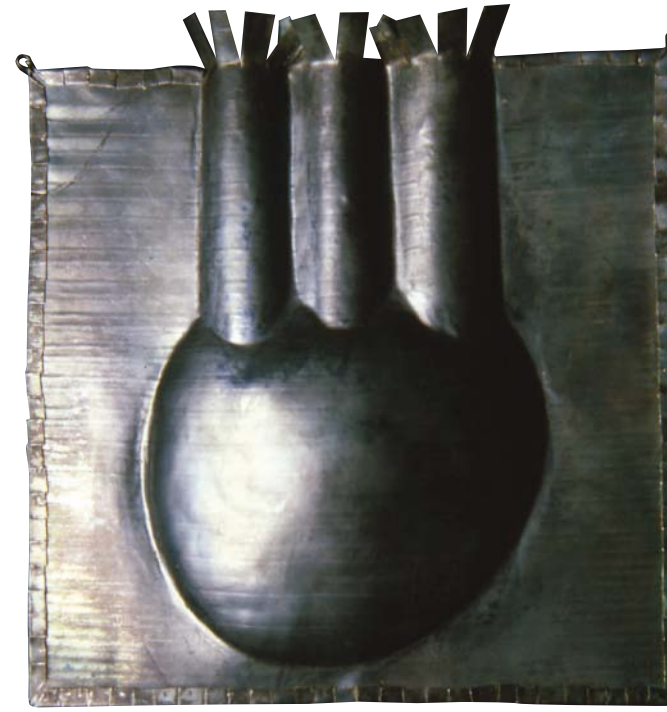
Hanagarth's preference for simple techniques, without using much equipment, became evident. Even today she enjoys working while traveling by train from Paris to her teaching post in Strasbourg: paper and metal sheet are suitable materials to carry and use while on the move. Tin can sheet, a very light and pliable material, allowed her to make small hollow forms consisting of two parts that were connected by folding the edges. When handling this soft and rather elastic material it automatically begins to pleat.

Hanagarth says she can spend hours in museums where she is "disconnected" from everything and "where time is in suspension," where she can empty her head. She finds inspiration in painting, folk art, and religious and magical objects. A small gilded shrine, dated 1514, at the Musée Dobrée in Nantes—for the heart of Anne de Bretagne, who arranged to have her heart housed in a gold reliquary and buried in the tomb of her parents in Nantes—fascinates her as an artifact and because of its shape and execution. Hanagarth is also a virtual collector of images (she loves to browse her many books about painting, the body, or ethnology), and of old religious or popular souvenirs, but, she says, "I never use them literally. They are in my head, and emerge, but in confrontation with another image as a hybrid, or some time later as to confirm the way I take."

Hearts are a theme that have engaged Hanagarth for quite some time. "The heart is a popular image in jewelry," she explains. "It is interesting to see how a heart can be expressed as a plastic form and as a sign." She has made hearts (pendants) with chimneys in the series "Armor for a Heart," or with a hole that enables the wearer to look inside. The chimneys referred to the energy, the soul, the burning and life. "Think about Genesis and about God who blows life in the heart of creatures," she expounds. With these pendants, Hanagarth has achieved a contemporary equivalent of religious mysticism, in her very personal and abstract way.

Around the same time, Hanagarth made a series of "Parasite" rings with found iron and gold objects, rendered wearable and often covered with the use of medical bandage. The small objects remind one of organs and the heart, the inner workings of the human body. The wrapping in medical bandages, including the bandage fastener, suggests ex votos used to pray for healing and prosperity. These cocoon-like rings only reveal a small fragment of what lies underneath the wrapping, creating intimacy and triggering one's curiosity.

Among the issues she addresses in her far-ranging jewelry are power, sexuality, and vanity.



Armor for a Heart (pendant), 1994
tin can, silver
4 x 4 x 1 ⅛"

Hanagarth's work became increasingly involved with bodily issues around 1995. For Hanagarth, a key aspect of jewelry is our physical experience of it, and she always wears her own jewelry, something most of her colleagues don't do. "It's like I'm on the stage of life," she says. "Jewelry is an attribute, something that defines a character." Hanagarth is also sensitive to the experience her jewelry offers other wearers. She underscores that she is touched by people who commission her to (re)make a piece of jewelry. "I like if pieces are really connected to one person and his desire, that there is a strong attraction."

Family Jewels (necklace), 1999
silicone
length 31 ½"

Family Jewels (necklace), 1997
beer bottle caps
length 63"

Hanagarth often addresses the subject of sexuality, staged on the body, in a lighthearted way. For instance, her "Breasts" series (1995-97), features hollow disc brooches with movable nipples. "I don't like brooches," Hanagarth says; "they are too much a decoration. But with the 'Breast' brooches it worked well; they had nipples that you could manipulate in public." For Hanagarth, it is important that a piece of jewelry should provide a bodily experience.

In 1998 Hanagarth presented her "Family Jewels" series of neckpieces. They look like long sashes ending in a ball or sack at either side; the sash is hung loosely around one's neck, with the pendulous ends hanging low near the legs. This series is based on the artist's interest in haptic experiences, diverse iconography, anatomical drawings, and etymological word play in French. Anatomical engravings (she is fascinated by prints by the 18th-century anatomist and artist Jacques Fabien Gautier d'Agoty), revealed that the testicles are not one whole but are held together by the skin; therefore she made the "Family Jewels" in two parts. Hanagarth likes the ambiguous nature of the balls she made in diverse materials such as bicycle tubing, silicone, beer bottle caps, and black nails. Each material carries a different association and provides a distinct sensual feel. The beer caps ("always Heineken," she says, "because I can use the red star in the middle as my focus point") strike a humorous tone, while the black

nails (especially when combined with the French trade name "semence de tapissier," printed on the box) trigger the mind to think about sperm.

Hanagarth takes advantage of the richness of language to talk about topics that most people avoid. In French, as in most languages, there are many euphemisms for male and female sexuality. Hanagarth uses this generous source in unexpected ways. Inspired by the word *burette* (oilcan), a euphemism for testicle, she connected a tin oilcan with two round roots of wood she found in an orchard. This fusion of a utensil and a natural material that both deal with juices, energy, and irrigation, results in a neckpiece heavy with fecund symbolism—especially when it hangs low between the legs. As a rebel, Hanagarth likes to tickle, prod, and arouse. Accordingly, at the opening of her solo show at Galerie A in Geneva (1998), she invited every visitor to wear the "Bijoux de Famille." People had to try on and feel the balls, and complete strangers were soon swapping their "family jewels." "It is important to make everyone experience the jewels," explains Hanagarth. "This is how my work is doing its job."

In line with her fearless approach to jewelry, Hanagarth does not avoid off-putting subjects like pests and insects. Such matters, as addressed in the "Vermins" brooches (2001) and the "Fleas" pins (2004), refer to vanity as the essence of the human condition. Excrement has also found its way into her work—and again she found inspiration in historical iconography, language, and culture. She disguised medals of honor ("Shitty Medals" 2001) and pearl necklaces in "excrements," which looked like little brownish balls, simply made from oxidized tin cans. And with "To Put on Index" (2001) violence entered her jewelry, in the form of a sturdy ring with star-shaped bullets worn on the index finger where it could arouse concern. Although inspired by the Order of the Golden Fleece, Hanagarth's "Fleece with Golden Paws" (2004), a series of silver mesh necklaces, moved so far away from their source that they look like fashionable contemporary fur stoles. And while they are soft and sensual, the paws allude to sex toys, and the forged rings with balls and flute also have sexual overtones.

Following a period of absence from her craft due to pregnancies and teaching, the idea of doing something "very easy" attracted Hanagarth. Therefore, in 2008 she made "*Série-B*," a group of pure iron forged jewelry pieces. The shapes are informed by folk art, basketry, and bakery (*Brezels*, *pretzel* in English), and in the words of Hanagarth: "describes a rush job." "Hit with hammer, twisted

For Hanagarth, it is important that a piece of jewelry should provide a bodily experience.

To Put on Index (ring), 1999
leather, tin can
1 ½ x 1 ¾"

Shitty Medal (brooch), 2000
leather, tin can, stainless steel
5 x 1 ⅛"

Lingam, 2010
steel bar
length 11 ¾"

Fleece with Golden Paws
(neckpiece), 2004
stainless steel, golded silver
35 ½ x 10 x 1 ⅛"

with pincers, pure iron offers a repertoire of braids, weaves and knots," she explains.[2] After some practice she was able to work with larger iron bars, making a giant "mushroom" for Ruudt Peters's *Lingam* exhibition (2010). Forging pleases her: "It is the gesture I like. And it is really the bar that gets a shape, such as the head of the mushroom."

The first "Trap" bracelets (2009), described by Hanagarth as "a double croissant," started with explorations in colorful plasticine. Resembling giant jaws eating a body part, these iron pieces are stunning, and frightening—especially to men. Hanagarth's choice for forging as a technique cannot be seen apart from issues of gender. Recently she worked with a forger in Normandy to make two tongues, "It was comical," she says, "You have all these male, long, erotic tools and I made two kissing flabby tongues with it." The resulting piece, *French Kiss*, was made for the exhibition "Mirror, mirror, un homage a Suzy Solidor[3]" and is further proof of Hanagarth's ability to talk about sexuality in a pithy way. The tongue, a gender-neutral organ, is the perfect attribute for the French actress and singer Solidor (known as the "most painted woman in the world"), who was publicly gay and bisexual

Hanagarth's jewelry engages the realm of the body, and gender, in a humorous and elegant way.

Lips - Trap (bracelet), 2009
pure iron
4 ⅜ x 3 ½ x ¾"

French Kiss (collar), 2012
pure iron, leather
length 11 ¾"

during the 1920s and '30s and had a turbulent sex life.

Hanagarth's jewelry engages the realm of the body, and gender, in a humorous and elegant way. Whether she forges "Braids" or a "French Kiss," cuts "Pompons" from silver sheet, or casts her recent stainless steel "Lipstick Rings," the body is always there as both inspiration and destination for her jewelry. She knows exactly where a piece will sit, how it will relate to bodily movement, and the allusions it will evoke. She knows this because she is fascinated by, and devoted to, jewelry. "Jewelry is so distant from the body by its artificiality, and so close when animated by the body," says Hanagarth. "It is a popular object and at the same time magical."

Amsterdam-based Liesbeth den Besten is an independent art historian, writer, curator and teacher.

1. Esther Brinkmann (1953) lives and works in Mumbai, India. From 1983–2005 she was a teacher of jewelry at the Haute École des Arts Appliqués in Geneva, where she taught several Swiss jewelers who are known internationally, and who teach, or run a gallery. Other students of hers are: Christian Balmer (Galerie Vice Versa, Lausanne), Brune Boyer (teacher at AFEDAP, Paris), Sonia Morel, Fabrice Schaefer (Galerie TACTILe, Geneva), and Annick Zufferey (Galerie Annick Zufferey, Carouge).
2. Text from her website www.sophiehanagarth.com, see: Série-B
3. Espace Solidor, Cagnes-sur-mer, France, 2012

Chris Ramsay
Collection, Composition, Contemplation

BY GLEN R. BROWN

Fossils: Patterns of Organic Energy
(wall piece), 1994
copper, wood, patinas, found objects, Oklahoma brachiopods
diameter 26"

ReCollection (table), 2006 (detail)
mixed media
90 x 30 x 34"

ReCollection (table), 2006
mixed-media
90 x 30 x 34"
PHOTO: MICHAEL STANO

THE DIVERSE ARTIFACTS and bits of nature in Chris Ramsay's expansive table-like sculpture *ReCollection* are personal. Collected over the course of a lifetime, these objects are of scant monetary value, but have been of infinite import to the formation of his worldview and the development of an artistic career that has employed assemblage as a metaphor for the unfolding of meaning.

Like so many others, Ramsay has pursued his passion for collecting with direction and purpose. As a collector he has been an arranger as well as an acquirer. In fact he may have become an acquirer specifically to satisfy a desire to arrange, inherent in his personality since childhood. "I'd go for walks and to school," Ramsay recalls, "and I'd pick things up and put them in my pocket, then bring them back to my bedroom and arrange them on a shelf. Often I'd take a rock and set a piece of glass or a coin on it. I always wanted to integrate the objects, to have a dialogue with them so that my hand would be part of arrangement as well."

The role of the hand in initiating this dialogue is crucial to Ramsay's understanding of art, which implicitly percieves creation as composition rather than as the generation of form. His decision to major in metals and jewelry as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan in the early '80s was, Ramsay asserts, "a way for me to figure out how to work with these things I'd been collecting." Later, as a graduate student at Texas Tech University, from which he received his MFA in 1986, he experienced an epiphany in the studio. "I realized that it wasn't really the pin backs that I was putting on the pieces that made sense to me," he remembers. "It was more the objects themselves. So I did a whole series of pieces that were designed to go in pockets and be taken out and explored."

Ramsay had long regarded the objects as conceptual triggers.

Tactile gratification was not the purpose of these early works; they were no mere worry stones. Ramsay had long regarded the objects

as conceptual triggers. Carriers of biography or of scientific narratives, they prompted ontological reflection, a grappling with ultimately unanswerable questions about the meaning of being, both that of the cosmos at large and that of Ramsay himself as one small part of it. His compositions of found objects began to conform to the confines of circles, which since the time of petroglyphs and cromlechs have served as symbols of cosmological order.

Ramsay's connection to the circle was far more personal as well. As a young man, he had befriended a former high-school classmate tragically diagnosed with terminal cancer. He recalls that following his friend's untimely death:

> *We all went out at his request and completed a garden that he and I had been working on over the course of the previous year. That night, after a big feast with family and friends, I returned home and went to bed. I was awakened in the middle of the night by a slap in the middle of my forehead. I had this sensation that something was over my left shoulder near the wall. I brought the sheets down and I turned, and these two absolutely perfect rings of whitish blue light came right at me. They just vibrated, and it was incredible.... I really felt that it was my friend Peter who had come back and shown me something incredible about life in this form of energy: a soul.*

The "Circles" series, begun in the 1980s, comprises both round brooches and large basin-shaped wall sculptures studded with found objects. The latter works, ranging up to 26 inches in diameter, are formed from raised copper etched or stamped with textures that recall fossil beds, swirls in smooth beach sand, or quaint illustrations from 16th-century natural history treatises. The relationship between the objects inlaid in the often lushly patinated copper surfaces and the etched or stamped imagery is one of presence and haunting absence.

This same relationship is inherent in fossils—which are formed over the millenia as the voids left by decaying organic matter are filled with mineral sediment—and reinforces the

Meditation in Stillwater No. 3,
(brooch), 2007
etched steel, silver, bronze, PMC
gold and found object
diameter 3 ½"

Meditation in Stillwater No. 5,
(brooch), 2007
etched steel, nickel, bronze, and
Pawnee-Oklahoma crinoid stems
diameter 3 ½"

conceptual relevance of some of Ramsay's favorite found objects. In the work *Fossils: Patterns of Organic Energy*, one of the earliest in the series, several brachiopod fossils, extracted from an Oklahoma quarry, grace the sculpture's verso, while their exact duplicates, cast in bronze, are inset in the front, like jewels encrusting a medieval monstrance. Fossils are more than ornaments in Ramsay's work, however. "I've always liked their form and the natural qualities of their beauty," he says. "When things aren't going so well I look at these fossils and think that life has gone on for a very long time and that there are all kinds of possibility for change."

Two groups of brooches, one begun in 2007 and the other in 2014, act as diminutive counterparts to the "Circle" wall sculptures. *Meditation in Stillwater* refers in a prosaic sense to Ramsay's home in the city of Stillwater, where he has been a professor of art at Oklahoma State University since 1990. More poetically, the title implies a contemplative gaze at objects beneath the placid surface of water (such as the pond that lies feet away from Ramsay's porch), and metaphorical reflection on what we might glimpse beneath the appearance of everyday things when we look through a natural lens. Some of the brooches, such as *Meditation in Stillwater No. 3*, in which bits of glass and shell set in dark etched steel seem to orbit around a luminous solar gold center, are in effect miniature versions of the "Circle" series wall pieces. Others approach the basic composition of concentric circles in a less literal fashion. *Meditations in Stillwater No. 5*, for example, surrounds a circular center of etched steel, nickel, and bronze with a constellation of round crinoid stems extracted from an Oklahoma fossil bed.

The more recent group of brooches begun in 2014, the "Earthen Relic" series, continues the concentric composition, incorporating parts of salvaged binocular eyepieces that encase tiny images or found objects, such as shells or bits of glass, encountered while beachcombing. Surrounding these focal points are thin brass-rimmed wooden disks bearing faint imagery pierced by circular patterns. Crinoid fossils reappear in a cluster at the center of the brooch *Earthen*

Earthen Relic Series: Aquatic Past, (brooch), 2014
recycled wood, ephemeral images, binocular, found Oklahoma crinoids and fish vertebrae
diameter 3"

Romantic Vision (brooch), 2014
brass, recycled wood, ephemeral images, binocular, glass, found butterfly
diameter 3"

Relic Series: Aquatic Past, in which the surrounding image of a primordial landscape—in faint pastel hues and obscured by a field of circular perforations—suggests the receding of Paleozoic seas and the beginnings of a new chapter in the earth's history. As if continuing the epic sweep across the millennia and into a recent era, the brooch *Romantic Vision* replaces crinoid fossils with a butterfly. The spotted blue wings of this insect echo the field of circles that extends outward over images of dark clouds, a tranquil sea, and a glowing beach. Illuminated by the soft solar light of a sunrise or sunset, a couple—who appear to be either the progenitors of the human race or the last iteration of its countless generations—stands in silent silhouette.

Condensed in their tiny confines are the tenets of a worldview that raises even the smallest and most mundane of objects to the status of talisman.

Ramsay's brooches are conceived as more than ornaments. Condensed in their tiny confines are the tenets of a worldview that raises even the smallest and most mundane of objects to the status of talisman. The brooches seem to relate narratives about a secret inner life that pulses beneath the surface of ordinary appearance. The binocular lenses surround and protect objects like windows, offering glimpses into the very nature of things. The association of the lenses with magnification suggests an intensely focused way of looking, both literal and metaphorical. In contrast to the ordinary vision that grasps the world in empirical terms, the way of seeing implied by Ramsay's brooches pierces the veil of quotidian appearances. It is no accident that the landscapes in these works are set between the rims of the brooches and the rims of the binocular lenses, as if to confirm the embrace of the cosmos by concentric rings: an emblem of the energy of the soul.

Many of Ramsay's sculptures, particularly those that exchange the plane geometry of the circle for the spherical geometry of the globe, offer a glimpse into otherwise hidden

A World View: Fruits and Vegetables, 1999
steel wire, fabricated bronze armature, wood and brass fabricated stereoscope, battery-operated light, marble and iron, cast bronze, early 1900s fruit and vegetable stereocards
27 x 17"

A World View: Birds, 1999
steel wire, fabricated bronze armature, wood and brass fabricated stereoscope, battery-operated light, found ceramic birds, cast bronze, early 1900's bird stereocards (detail below)
27 x 17"

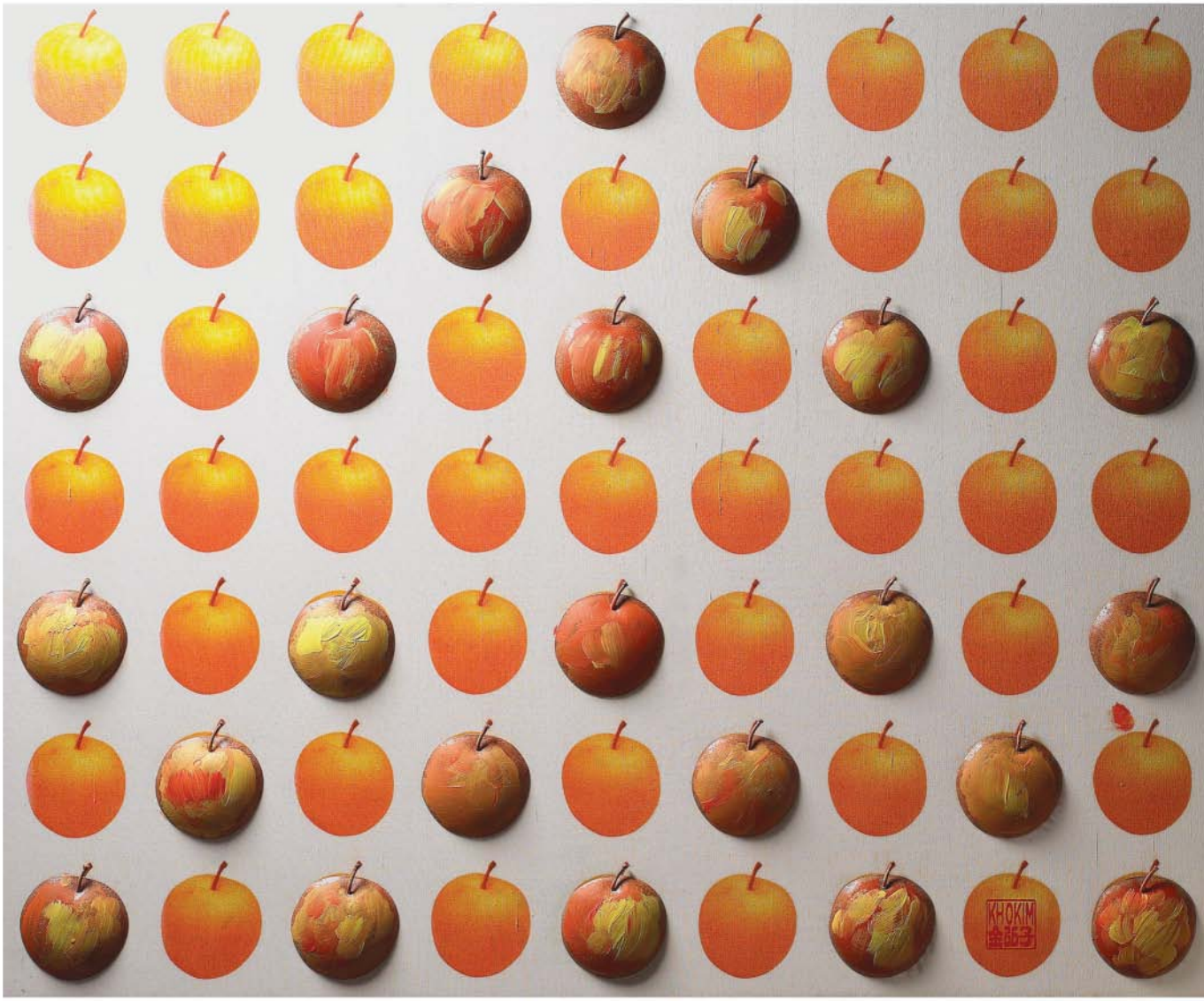
As You Save... So You Prosper, 2000 (detail)
10 globes of similar size and shape, displayed side-by-side on a 4' shelf, each featuring a different National Park postage stamp from the 1934–35 commemorative series
12 x 60 x 10"

interiors. An early example of his "Globes," the 1999 sculpture trio *A World View* (subtitled *Birds*, *Insects*, and *Fruits and Vegetables*) was fabricated by weaving steel wire over bronze armatures and equipping the spheres with found object stands and handmade eyepieces. Like Marcel Duchamp's cryptic *Étants donnés* (translated *Given*), Ramsay's *A World View* sculptures offer the viewer access to "truth" in the ironic form of optical illusions. In Ramsay's case, these illusions—three-dimensional views of flora and fauna in a strange black-and-white stasis—are created by Edwardian stereopticon cards purchased at a library deacquisition sale. Among Ramsay's recent "Globes" is the implicitly admonitory *As You Save...So You Prosper*, an array of vintage globe-shaped banks, each of which contains not secret images but rather earth from one of the country's national parks.

The inclination to preserve follows naturally from an animistic perspective on the world.

The synergy between meditation and conservation is clear to an artist who has long contemplated a hidden energy within objects. After all, the inclination to preserve follows naturally from an animistic perspective on the world. For Ramsay, an immaterial unity—whether the stuff of souls or something more like gravity or a magnetic field—binds existence together across space and time. If that unity, the ordering principle of the universe, is the key to the basic processes of creation, growth, death, and decay, it is also key to the meaning of Ramsay's collecting and arranging of ordinary objects encountered in his walk through life. Finding the objects is only half of the process. "I'm trying to arrange [objects] in a way so that they can complement each other, so that they can speak," says Ramsay. "There's that connection, I have no idea what it is, but it's there connecting the inner workings of things. In the process of arranging, every so often I hear it."

Glen R. Brown is a professor of art history and the Art Department Director of Graduate Studies at Kansas State University.



Komelia Okim
Bridging with Metal

BY KATJA TOPORSKI

American Pear/ Korean Pear
(wall reliefs), 2011
digital photo print on silk, copper, patina, oil paint
50 x 40 x 4"

Women by the Well
(diptych wind screen), 1960
fabric, oil paint, silk thread
42 x 45 x 1"

A VISIT TO Korean-American metal artist Komelia Okim's studio is a journey through 50 years of productivity. The space is brimming with benches, tools, a small library of craft books, stacks of organizers filled with various supplies and works in progress, and boxes containing embroidery silks in an endless array of colors. Even more impressive is the private gallery space on the floor above her studio, which has a multitude of display cases exhibiting the artist's work over the course of her long career.

Okim's work remained focused on jewelry's representational and sculptural qualities, embracing its role as an independent object that augments the wearer's appearance.

Okim's recent retirement after 42 years as head of the jewelry and metals department at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland, prompted a retrospective of her work at the local VisArt Gallery, and an accompanying exhibition of work by 42 of her students, both titled *Fire from the Forge*. The exhibition catalogue documents Okim's artistic development, with an introduction to each phase in her oeuvre written in both English and Korean. Images of her work are interspersed with numerous pictures from the artist's professional as well as personal life, leaving the reader with the impression that her art is simply an extension of her life as a whole.

Centered at the back of the exhibition space is an embroidered Asian windscreen diptych titled *Women by the Well*, made when Okim was still a student in the fibers department at Ehwa Women's College in Seoul. It depicts an artisanal scene of stylized figures in an idealized landscape. The reduced geometry of the figures renders them as compositional elements within the landscape,

an arrangement inspired by the French post-impressionist painter Georges Seurat. The pastel outlines of the women were brush painted in oil onto the fabric, which was then delicately embroidered with the thinnest of silk thread in more vibrant colors, seeming to add miniature paint strokes, and creating highlights and the illusion of depth.

After emigrating with her family first to Hawaii and then briefly to San Francisco, Okim abandoned fiber in favor of metal in 1973, when pursuing her MFA at Indiana University, Bloomington. By 1981, her exploration of metal led to the appearance of a group of impeccably crafted raised silver vessels in the shape of elongated anthropomorphic figures. Their forms show greater abstraction than the figures in her previous fiber work, while serving as functional containers with a barely noticeable hinged lid. Their numbered titles (*Promenade 1-7)* highlight them as a group as well as individual pieces.

Okim's interest in the effect of the environment on humanity was rekindled by a return visit to Seoul in 1982. Struck by the number of bridges now spanning the Han River and the resulting connections to the north of the country, she was inspired to create a series of urn-like vessels and representational jewelry pieces such as *Fieldscape.* Slanted metal elements are arranged in modern architectural compositions, with occasional gems or anodized titanium slabs resembling miniature reflections from windowpanes. Titles such as *Amethystscape* point to the role of the gem in the formation of the small-scale environment: the microcosm of the jewel reflects the order of the macrocosm of the world at large.

In the second half of the 20th century, when Okim entered the jewelry field, there was an explosion of conceptual exploration into the function of jewelry. Glenn Adamson, in his book *Thinking through Craft,* describes two opposing positions predating those developments: one taken by Margaret DePatta, who regarded jewelry as wearable sculpture and as such autonomous from the body; the other exemplified by Art Smith, who allowed jewelry to become a part of the body, treating both as a sculpture. Despite the subsequent departures from either of those approaches, Okim's work remained focused on jewelry's representational and sculptural qualities, embracing its role as an independent object that augments the wearer's appearance.

Another group of Okim's signature pieces emerged in the 1990s: wall sculptures with contemplative titles, evoking scenes of outings in the park, such as *Three Voices in the Meadow.* Here flat metal figures are placed in an abstracted natural setting; wiry grass sprouts behind them and a netting of nickel branches and large brass leaves frames the scene. Both the two-dimensional arrangement of the individual features and the theme of the figures in a representational natural milieu relate to the early fiber works Okim had made some 30 years prior. It was perhaps this two-dimensionality that incited Gallery Hyundai in Seoul to commission a series of coffee tables that feature similar scenes placed underneath a glass tabletop. They also commissioned a group of mirrors, in which figures and environmental abstractions were arranged along a rectangular frame.

Promenade 1-7, Tribute To Seurat (vessels), 1981
silver
5–12"

*Fieldscape 1 (*earrings), 1983
silver, 24k gold, titanium
1 ½ x 1 x ¼"

Three Voices in the Meadow
(sculpture), 1993
copper, brass, nickel, patina
48 x 38 x 6"

Early in the new millennium a shift in scale in Okim's hollowware occurred. The figurine vessels became almost human-sized, and she created a number of large patinated copper vessels crafted from enormous metal sheets specially ordered from Holland. The *Lucky Pouch* (2002) refers to a Korean tradition of wearing an embroidered fabric pouch fastened to the belt with a cord. It contains money and is supposed to confer good fortune to the wearer. *Lucky Pouch* is forged from sheet copper and stands 22 inches tall, with the cord made from electrical wire found at a junkyard. While it could conceivably contain large riches, its oversized scale questions its functionality as container.

Howard Risatti, in his book *A Theory of Craft,* argues that the identity of the craft object is grounded in materials, process, and functional form. Whereas art objects rely on the images they employ independent of the media they are created in, craft objects are defined by their utility and material. By applying this distinction to Okim's work we can see that her sole use of metal places her in the craft category, yet the introduction of imagery into her work transcends the boundary between art and craft.

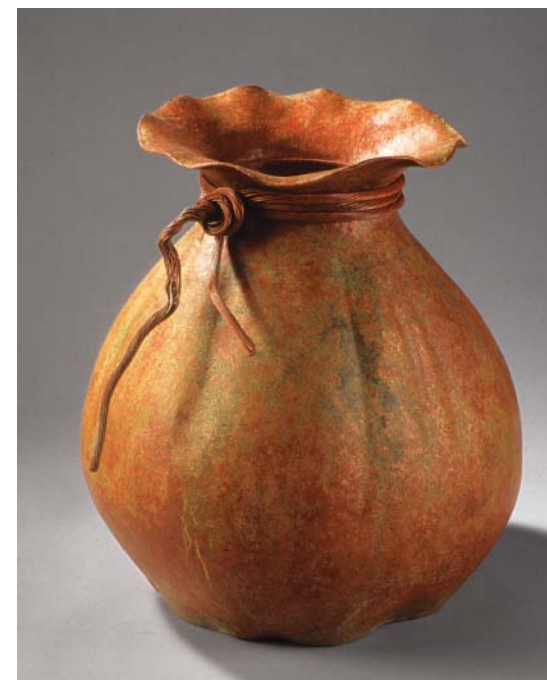
Okim has created a number of silver tea sets for use at Korean wedding services, such as *Ceremonial Wedding Rituals* of 2009. The traditional ceremony involves a number of symbolic customs, including the exchange of specific food items and gifts like silver chopsticks and spoons. Okim's previous tea sets had espoused more of a 1980s aesthetic, with zigzag-shaped handles or triangular kum-boo gilded decorations. This one, however, seems more traditional in shape, while clearly displaying Okim's handwriting with the elongated handle of the teapot reminiscent of a dancing figure. All items are decorated with stamp-like kum-boo lettering, spelling "long life" and "happiness" in Korean. These embellishments, which involve a complex transfer of thin, fine gold sheet onto a metal stamp, from which it is fused onto the rounded surface of the vessels, are testimony to Okim's exceptional craftsmanship.

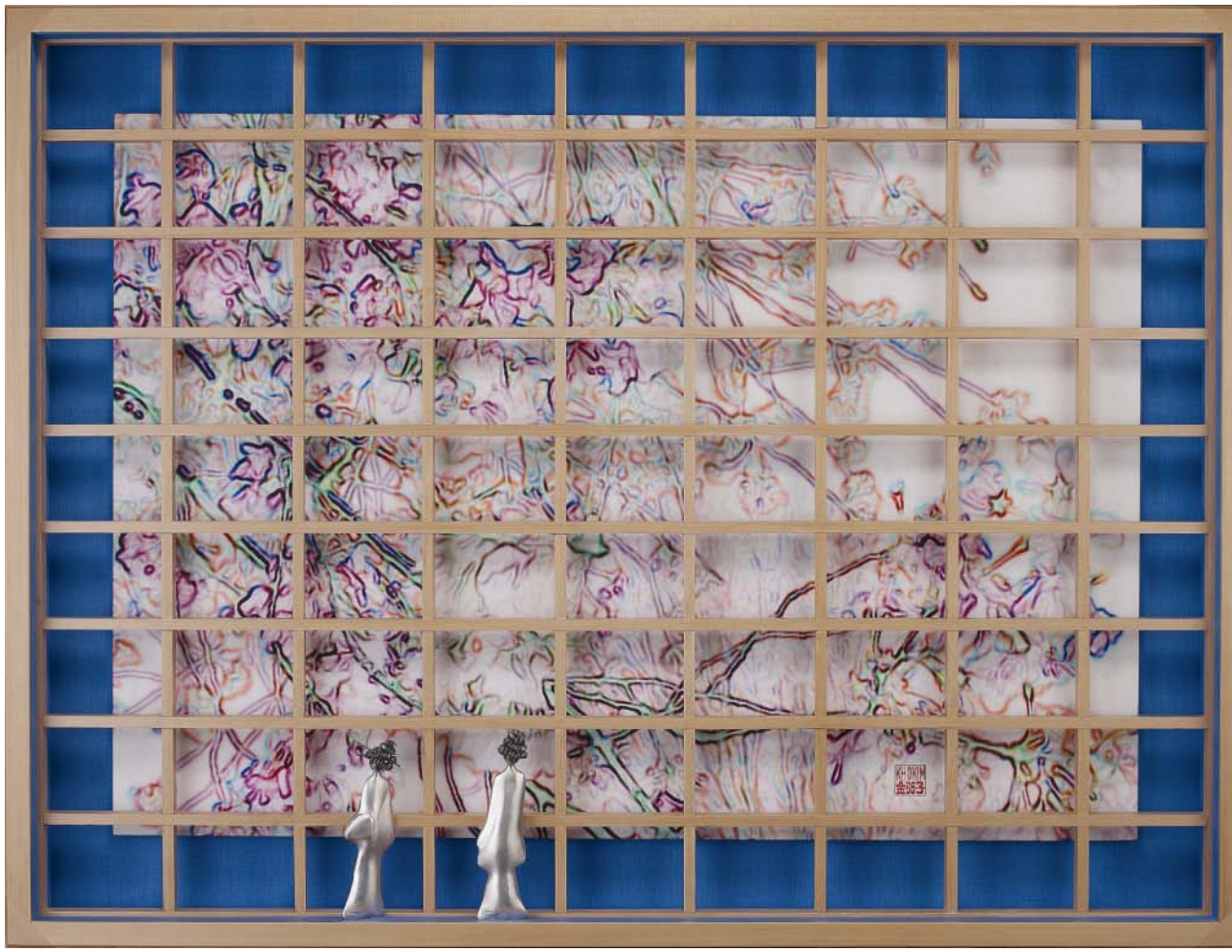
Positioned between the culture of her roots in Korea and that of her new home near Washington, D.C., Okim was the perfect ambassador for cross-cultural exchange in the metal arts. Twice she returned to Korea on a Fulbright scholarship: once in 1982 when she taught at Hong-Ik University, Seoul; and in 1994, to teach at Won-Kwang University in Iksan City. Her coordination of workshops and seminars with an exhibition of Korean and international artists, as well as establishment of metal arts associations for students at various universities, many of who came to the US to study for a second MFA, speaks to her tireless energy to support and nurture the metal arts in its myriad facets. A sojourn at the Korean traditional craft museum and visits to craft villages and historical sites on these trips stimulated

Positioned between the culture of her roots in Korea and that of her new home near Washington, D.C., Okim was the perfect ambassador for cross-cultural exchange in the metal arts.

*Ceremonial Wedding Rituals (*Tea and Paebeck Set on Red Tray), 2009
fine and sterling silver, 24k kum-boo, glass

*Lucky Pouch (*vessel), 2002
copper, patina
22 x 20 x 20"





Human Connection through Art and Culture 2 (wall relief), 2013
digital photo print on silk, silver, oxidation, wood screen
40 x 50 x 4"

Okim to research traditional customs and craft practices. She imported a number of metal patination methods to Korea and was instrumental in introducing ancient Korean metalsmithing practices to the US. Among them were Korean Damascene inlay and Kum-Boo, techniques she has since taught in workshops worldwide.

Okim's most recent work returns to her origins in fiber, with which she addresses the cultural dualism she navigates. *American Pear/Korean Pear* is a set of digital photo prints showing pears on a white silk background arranged in a grid. One is composed entirely of the fruit known as pear in the Western hemisphere; the other shows the more spherical Asian variety. The majority of these pears are printed as exact copies of one another. Interspersed are chased low relief copper pears, individually oil painted to match the color scheme of the print. This work is as much about the individual within the masses as it is about the relationship of East to West, broadening the theme to the artist's original quest of the person's place in her surroundings.

Okim's most recent work returns to her origins in fiber, with which she addresses the cultural dualism she navigates.

Okim created a group of digitally manipulated photographs in 2013 to address the topic in a more subtle way. *Human Connection through Art and*

Culture 2 comprises an image of cherry blossom printed on silk, framing a digitally abstracted version of the same image. Both are set behind a wooden grid typically used as window screens in East Asia. In the lower corner are two raised silver figurines with Japanese-style hair and clothing, apparently looking out onto the scene. While the scale of the blossoms is life-sized, the figures are dwarfed by comparison; they appear overwhelmed by the oversized window and the scene beyond. This dissonance in scale leaves the viewer wondering whether the screened window encloses the two figures, or the blossom so rigidly framed by it.

A group of brightly colored wall sculptures, such as *Through the Space II,* emerged in Okim's work in 2013. Here a number of steel components are painted with oil sticks, each with its own cheery color. These works are more abstracted than previous representations but still refer to elements found in landscape in both form and color scheme. Despite the dynamic arrangement of the separate segments, its display on the wall ultimately calls for a two-dimensional composition, much like the tables and mirrors in previous works. It is perhaps this flat back that led Okim to also create a number of brooches and pendants as exact copies of the larger steel sculpture; silver is substituted for steel and gold plating for bright oil paint. The uniformity of the gold simultaneously draws attention to the composition and distracts from it with its reflective metal surface.

This dichotomy raises the question about how design principles such as material, color, and scale affect our perception of a work of art. How would we look at the wall sculpture if it were all made of highly polished gold? How would we see the brooch if it were painted steel? When asked which came first, the sculpture or the jewels, Okim answers without hesitation: the sculpture! In a review of a 1993 exhibition that displayed Okim's sculpture alongside her jewelry, Susan Isaacs wrote that "the grace of the jewelry informs the refinement of the sculpture," inferring that the brooches were the starting point. Perhaps the truth is somewhere in the middle. While ultimately both the wall and the body pose similar constraints on the design, it is the power of the composition and its theme unified by the process of metal working that matter regardless of scale. This of course hearkens back to Margaret DePatta's approach to jewelry as "sculpture to wear."

After an artistic career spanning more than half a century, Komelia Okim shows no signs of slowing down. She still has more work to make, has her private gallery space to arrange, and is currently in the process of applying for a third Fulbright scholarship. Her tireless energy has brought together generations of metalsmiths, through her exemplary artistic life, and her passion for all things metal, building cultural bridges halfway across the globe.

Katja Toporski is a Washington, DC–based jeweler and writer, and teaches at Towson University.

Through the Space V
(pendant with chain), 2014
sterling silver, 18K gold plated
3 x 3 x ½"

Through the Space II
(wall relief), 2013
steel, paint, oil stick, crayon
40 x 30 x 12"

Reviews

"Dick Polich: Transforming Metal into Art"

Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art
SUNY New Paltz
August 27–December 14, 2014

by Andrea DiNoto

In 1970, the metallurgist Richard F. (Dick) Polich established Tallix, a foundry in New York's Hudson Valley, at which dozens of world-famous 20th-century artists came to explore the creative synergy possible between making and casting (i.e., between art and craft). Significantly, Polich derived the name Tallix from "metallics," adding the final X to symbolize the intersection between art and industry. This show's comprehensive and fully illustrated catalogue—an homage both to the man and the institution—features curator David Belasco's essay recounting Polich's impressive story, from Yale undergraduate to self-described "conductor" at Tallix. In 1982 he declared: "The artist's desire rules us."

For more than 50 years, under Polich's expert guidance, hundreds of pieces of art in various media have been transformed at Tallix into cast metal—an altogether new dimension of materiality. As testament to that collaborative alchemy, the first part of this illuminating three-part show presents 11 sculptures by as many artists (Janine Antoni, Cleve Gray, Nancy Graves, Jeff Koons, Roy Lichtenstein, Isamu Noguchi, Tom Otterness, Rona Pondick, Martin Puryear, Joel Shapiro, and Frank Stella); many pieces are shown with accompanying sketches and drawings. Each of the works on display demonstrates how, in vastly different ways, metal craft can be a creative partner in the realization of an artist's vision.

Part Two of the exhibition is a 30-minute video that conveys the huge scale of the foundry operation, where 75 workers handle up to 80 projects simultaneously on any given day. The visual drama of heat and materials includes mold-making, the pouring of molten metal in the lost wax process and its variants; mold-breaking; and finishing, which involves both handwork and chemical patination. Additionally, Tom Otterness's witty 2006 installation *How a Bronze is Made*, presents a helpful step-by-step demo, from idea to finished casting, using as an example his maquette for *Mad Mama* (a monumental bronze at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan). But the show's focus remains the striking variety of works in Part One, each of which demonstrates the virtuosity and adaptability of the casting process to a range of art concepts.

Appropriately enough, as one enters the gallery, Joel Shapiro's minimalist 1969 *Untitled (Six Types of Metal)* presents the viewer with six identical 2 ½-inch cubes, each cast from a different metal and distinguished only by its intrinsic properties. In pop-art mode, a two-dimensional, cartoonish perspective is maintained in Lichtenstein's 1977 *Lamp on Table,* which began as a full-size collage, evolved to a wooden maquette, then was cast and fabricated so that light rays are rendered in solid bronze painted in yellow by the artist. In Nancy Graves's 1985 *Looping,* a typical melange of found objects—a fan, rebar, BX cable, rope and fruits and vegetables—were welded together by the artist in a dynamic, neo-expressionist composition. The effect is intensified by her hand-applied garish colors rendered in

JEFF KOONS
Cape Codder Troll, 1986
stainless steel
21 x 8 ½ x 9"
© JEFF KOONS

ISAMU NOGUCHI
Strange Bird (To the Sunflower), 1945
bronze
56 ¾ x 22 ½ x 20"

polyurethane paint and baked enamel. Frank Stella, who like Graves has worked extensively on site with Polich, is represented by two pieces, notably a 2000 cast silver maquette for his never-realized (due to cost overruns) *Miami Bandshell*. In miniature, the openwork, ribbon-like structure—inspired both by a cheap beach hat and smoke rings—reduces, or perhaps aesthetically elevates, the architectural concept to precious object, a transformation not normally associated with foundry work but here perfectly realized.

In the mid-'80s, Jeff Koons approached Tallix with his own quirky version of conceptual art, bringing cheap plaster souvenirs and figurines for casting. His 1986 *Cape Codder Troll* has a deliberately unfinished surface. Having done little manual work on the stainless steel product, Koons claimed the foundry's "translation" of sculpture from plaster to metal to be his conceptual art.

Those who would view casting as a merely reproductive process might consider Isamu Noguchi's comment, recorded in the artists'-statements section of the catalogue: "Whether or not bronze is a reproduction is secondary to its effectiveness as art." A case in point is a 1988 bronze of Noguchi's 1945 green slate *Strange Bird (To the Sunflower),* constructed of interlocking biomorphic forms. The exquisitely smooth, black patination of the Polich bronze bears an uncanny resemblance to slate, thereby honoring the original's own subdued beauty while restating it with fresh originality. As Noguchi adds: "Paradox and disguise are elements of all art."

If the interrelatedness of art and craft was once thought paradoxical, even anathema, this show reaffirms the opposite, with convincing examples of memorable and important works.

Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer on art, craft and design.

"Iris Eichenberg: Bend"

Cranbrook Art Museum
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
November 23, 2014–
January 25, 2015

by Davira S. Taragin

Organized by Laura Mott, Cranbrook Art Museum's Curator of Contemporary Art and Design, *Iris Eichenberg: Bend* is billed as a retrospective, but does not follow the prescribed definition of one. Unlike the typical retrospective, which presents an artist's aesthetic through a selection of works that span his/her career, this exhibition consists entirely of new work built from the vocabulary Eichenberg has developed over the past 25 years.

The exhibition is pure Eichenberg. Reflecting her ongoing concern with materiality, it demonstrates her fascination with a wide repertoire of materials, including some not typically associated with metalwork. The essential practice within all her work—recontextualizing the everyday into the precious—is as pervasive here as it was when it was the mantra in the jewelry programs she headed at Amsterdam's Gerrit Rietveld Academy (2000–07) and now at Cranbrook. Equally evident is her desire to definitively link both jewelry and small, autonomous objects to the body. The show also underscores motifs such as the ellipse and mirrored surfaces, quintessential Eichenberg vocabulary.

The basic forms within this new work have their origins in traditional metalwork: in jewelry such as watches and chains; flatware, specifically the spoon; and metalsmithing implements such as weights. What distinguishes them from their traditional use as well as from Eichenberg's previous work, however, is their size. Instead of the domestic scale that marked her earlier objects, here she has juxtaposed monumental sculptures with *kunstkammer* (cabinets of curiosities). One colossal sculpture is composed of the individual brass rods that are usually melted to form a piece of jewelry but here are strung together and powered by a motor so that they move—suggesting the motion of a necklace on a wearer or actual bodily movement. Other works anticipate movement. One cannot help but wonder whether Eichenberg, who has lived and worked in America since 2006, now belongs to that group of makers who have shifted from the single object toward environments. She has often claimed that she feels freer to experiment in America than she did in Europe.

Eichenberg's work has usually been viewed within the context of politically charged post-World War II German art, particularly in relationship to the early works of Joseph Beuys, which features personal iconography without a clear narrative. Her work has often been identified with a similar quest for identity and a desire to understand the events in her life.

Bend is dark and bleak, revealing none of the optimism that marked Eichenberg's debut at Cranbrook

Untitled, 2014
mirror, gold, brass, white oak plywood
48 x 29 x 29"

IRIS EICHENBERG
Untitled (sculptures), 2014
steel, mirror

years ago. Apparitions of human silhouettes drawn on oval-shaped mirrored surfaces are reminiscent of 19th-century pendants and are repeated as shadows on walls, engendering a deep sense of loss. Circular forms like pocket watches suspended from stainless steel stands—a recurring motif—recall the Surrealistic clock faces of Salvador Dali's iconic painting *Persistence of Memory*; they, too, are an elegiac reference to the passage of time. Even Eichenberg's characteristic flesh-colored palette—an outgrowth of her ongoing explorations with women's pantyhose—has turned somber, adding to the pervading sense of despair and melancholy.

Despite being a strong advocate of craftsmanship, Eichenberg chose to enlist fabricators for some components of this exhibition. This decision does not influence the concept of the show, confirming the growing opinion that discourse about such collaboration may be as irrelevant in the field of contemporary craft as it is in painting and sculpture.

A conventional retrospective offers the artist the opportunity to revisit work not seen for years. *Bend*, on the other hand, is about a maker in the throes of a major transition. One can only speculate as to where Eichenberg will be five years from now. Her artistic investigations have met with mixed response in America because, conceptually, her work does not fit neatly within categories. *Bend* positions Eichenberg squarely as a pioneer immersed in both European and American cultures who is questioning the very nature of the field.

Davira S. Taragin is consultative curator of decorative arts at the David Owsley Museum of Art, Ball State University.

“Treasures from India: Jewels from the Al-Thani Collection”

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
October 28, 2014–January 25, 2015

by Rosanne Raab

If you have a passion for diamonds, rubies, and pearls, the sumptuous collection “Treasures from India,” installed adjacent to the entrance of the Islamic Art galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, will not disappoint. Sixty-three jeweled objects, from the private collection of Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al-Thani, were selected by curator Navina Najat Haidar for their “remarkable sense of continuity with the past.” The exhibition represents a broad range, from the historic Mogul era to contemporary works created by the house of Cartier, designer Paul Iribe, and jeweler Joel Arthur Rosenfeld, aka JAR.

The Mughal occupation of northern India from 1600 to 1900 marked a period when Indian royalty was enamored with gems and jewels from the past, icons that conveyed symbolic, talismanic, and auspicious associations of power, wealth, and future success. Diamonds, rubies, and sapphires were mined in India for centuries, and emeralds, discovered in Colombia in the 16th century, were handcrafted into body adornments and ceremonial objects by local artisans (no marks or names are recorded) in Jaipur, Ahmedabad, and Varanasi. Designs were influenced by Indian traditions and affected the tastes and patronage of later maharajas, nawabs, and collectors around the world.

Large-scale photographs on the gallery walls create a context for these magnificent jewels. Pageboys at the court of King George V and Queen Mary (1911) are attired in sumptuous embroidered silk garments and jewels. The Maharaja of Patiala proudly shows off a choker made by Cartier, and the stylish Maharani of Indore wears a stylized Art Deco necklace with an emerald pendant dating from the 1930s. These images offer a glimpse into a rarefied world of wealth.

The intimate space of the gallery, fitted with a cluster of freestanding vitrines, allows close inspection of these sparkling colored gemstones

SOUTH INDIA, MYSORE
Finial from the Throne of Tipu Sultan, ca. 1790
gold, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, lac core
height 2 ¾"

SOUTH INDIA, HYDERABAD
Turban Ornament (sarpesh) , 1800–50
gold, diamonds, spinel beads, enamel
height 7 ¼"

enclosed in traditional kundran settings, in which 22k to 24k gold, silver, or platinum, are backed by foil, enriching the gem's color. Notably, a turban ornament (*sarpesh*), with a foliage-clustered design of diamonds and a reverse surface of red, green, dark blue, and powder-blue enameling, epitomizes this technique.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, European claw settings (prongs bent over the girdle of the gemstone) came into vogue. The collection includes the 1935 remodeled version of a turban ornament (*jigha*), originally worn by Maharaja Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji, the ruler of Nawanagar, with dangling diamonds in a white gold claw setting. The adoption of Western styles draws attention to a global exchange of ideas.

Another highlight of the exhibition is a Nephrite jade dagger (ca.1620–25), originally owned by two emperors. The hilt, with an exquisitely rendered human head, was made for Jahangir and rebladed for his son Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal. The "snail shell" curls suggest the Renaissance inspiration of a European artisan at the Mughal court. Other distinctive jades in the collection, a fly whisk holder (*chauri*) and base of a water pipe (*huqqa*) are stunning examples of masterly carving.

Inspired by Indian wildlife are turban ornaments shaped in elephant silhouettes, bird of paradise plumes set on a jeweled crown headdress bearing the coat of arms of Nepal, and jade gazelle heads that decorate an arc-shaped crutch handle (*zafar takiya*). A tiger's head finial, one of eight from the majestic throne of Tipu Sultan (ca. 1790), is encrusted with an emerald collar and myriad rubies and diamonds; certainly this courtly setting demanded attention and respect for the ruler known as "The Tiger of Mysore."

Rosanne Raab is a curator and writer specializing in craft and design.

"Modern Opulence in Vienna: The Wittgenstein Vitrine"

Dallas Museum of Art
November 15, 2014–
October 18, 2015

by Ana M. Lopez

An extraordinary example of early-20th-century Viennese silver has found a new home in Texas. The Dallas Museum of Art has acquired the Wittgenstein Vitrine, a display cabinet designed by Carl Otto Czeschka of the Weiner Werkstätte (Vienna Workshops). This masterwork is currently in their conservation gallery, accompanied by a selection of objects that contribute period and aesthetic context in an exhibition titled "Modern Opulence in Vienna: The Wittgenstein Vitrine."

The vitrine was the centerpiece of the Weiner Werkstätte display at the 1908 Kunstschau (Art Show) held on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the reign of Emperor Francis Joseph I. It was purchased by Karl Wittgenstein, a wealthy industrialist whose family gave significant patronage to the Secessionists and the Werkstätte. It remained in private hands until the DMA was able to purchase it in 2014.

Fin-de-siècle Vienna is internationally recognized as a hotbed of progressive aesthetic and cultural developments. The Weiner Werkstätte (1903–1932) were the source of artistically designed interiors and furnishings for an elite and cosmopolitan clientele. The group was founded by architect Hans Hoffmann and painter Koloman Moser as a collaborative collection of artists and designers who wanted greater control over the production and distribution of their progressive designs. Offering services by commission or on speculation, their ultimate aim was the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art: a completely unified environment. As such they were able to supply designs for everything from an entire building to a single ring on an owner's hand. The history of royal patronage in the region had sustained a high level of craftsmanship that had not yet been affected by industrialization. The Werkstätte employed large numbers of master craftsmen in areas including ceramics, glass, leatherwork, graphics, textiles and fashion. However, it was the goldsmiths, silversmiths, and cabinetmakers who made Carl Czeschka's design for an exceptional showpiece into a reality.

At just over five feet high, the vitrine is elevated by a wooden base with an ebony veneer. The cabinet itself features chased silver openwork of stylized natural motifs within an organizing framework of sinuous panels. The nearly identical silver sides depict flowing vine and floral forms interspersed with clusters of pearl fruits and woodland creatures such as squirrels, birds, mice, and lizards peering out with moonstone eyes. On either side of the top are caryatids clothed in fields of pattern, bowing their heads as they support the top plateau. The somber sentinels stand in tranquil repose with faces and hands of ivory, arms clad in checked mother-of-pearl and cloaks of silver, opal, lapis and blue enamel. The tall front door and answering back panel include stacked arabesque

The Wittgenstein Vitrine, 1908 (details)

windows of beveled glass through which the interior may be glimpsed. The spaces around the framed glass are inhabited by more woodland creatures, scampering about the foliage. Interior glass walls and shelving define a display space inside that is more obscured by the outer ornamentation than not. The vitrine took more than two years to complete and nothing else the Werkstätte produced came close to it in terms of scale and complexity.

The restrained ornamentation marks a stylistic midpoint in the Werkstätte, between the severe simplicity of the early designs of Hoffmann and Moser and the later exuberance of designers like Dagobert Peche. The initial use of stark geometries was both a reaction to the prevalent historicist styles and an attempt to reimagine an art for their time, reflecting the optimism and uncertainty of early modernism. Controlled embellishments began to reemerge in their designs around 1906. The flora and fauna on the vitrine are similar to those found on a woven and embroidered fire screen designed by Czeschka and Hoffmann in 1906, which was also owned by Wittgenstein and now resides in the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna. Something of the pattern-filled figures can also be traced to the imagery of their Secessionist contemporary, Gustav Klimt.

The "Modern Opulence" exhibition also includes an illuminating video detailing the extensive conservation work that has returned the cabinet to its original glory, as well as a biographical sketch of Wittgenstein. The Wittgenstein cabinet joins an already impressive collection of silver at the DMA, including a dressing table and stool from Gorham's Martelé line that is made entirely of chased silver and was produced for the 1900 Paris exposition.

Ana M. Lopez is a metalsmith, educator and decorative arts scholar teaching at the University of North Texas.

CARL OTTO CZESCHKA (designer)
The Wittgenstein Vitrine, 1908
silver, moonstone, opal, lapis lazuli, mother-of-pearl, baroque pearls, onyx, ivory, enamel, glass, ebony veneers
66 ¼ x 24 x 12 ⅝"
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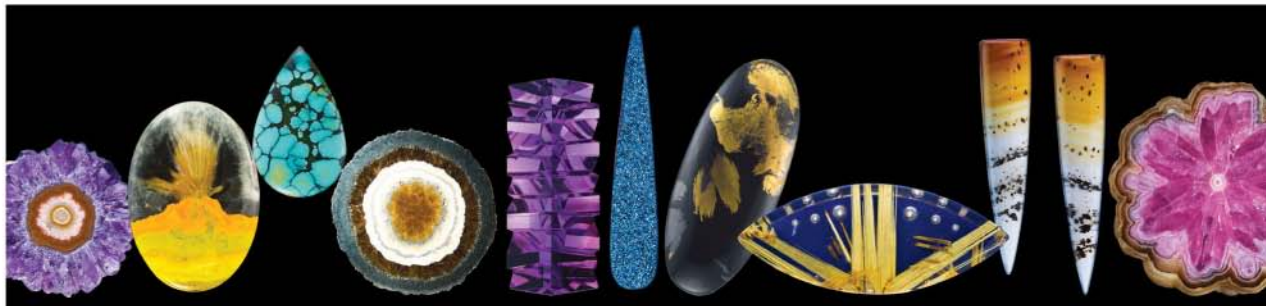

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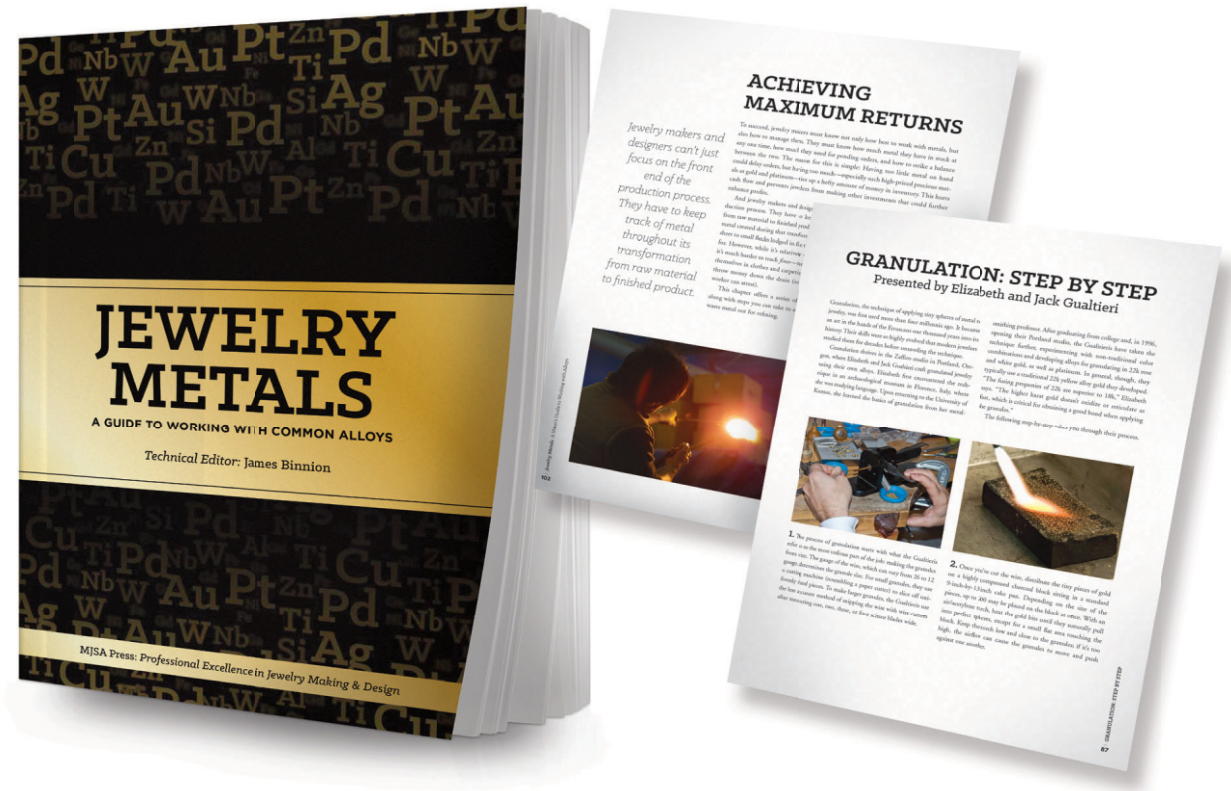
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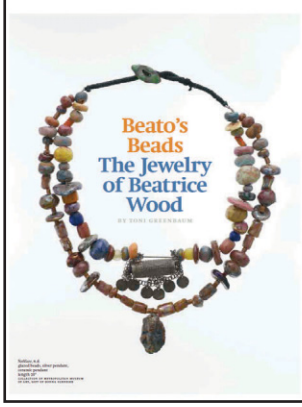
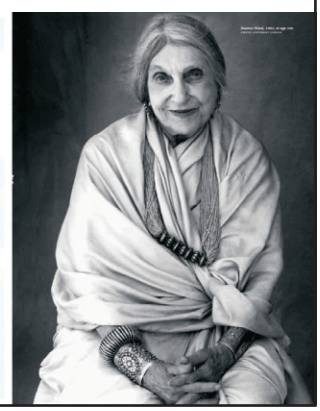
Erratum

Since the publication of "Beato's Beads: The Jewelry of Beatrice Wood" in the prior issue of *Metalsmith* (vol 35/no 2), additional details about Wood's first jewelry exhibition have been provided by Mark Del Vecchio, who, along with Garth Clark, was instrumental in bringing her ceramic work to public attention. Whereas the article stated that Wood's jewelry was first exhibited in her 1981 solo show, "Beatrice Wood: A Very Private View," that exhibition consisted solely of pottery. It was not until 1985-86 that Wayne Kuwada, then director of the Garth Clark Gallery, encouraged Wood to make necklaces to exhibit in a gallery show.





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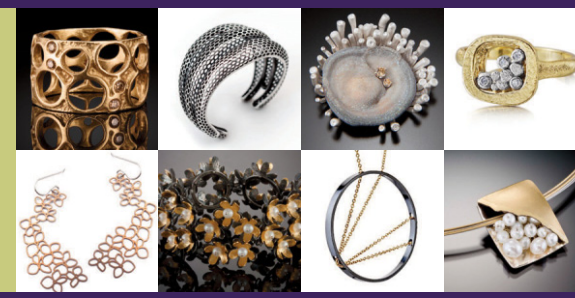

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Claudio Pino is world renowned, especially for his unique sculptural rings. Whether exploring systems in motion, metamorphosis of insects or the pace of urban life, his designs always revolve around combination of colours and shapes. He is passionate about gemstones and fascinated by their properties. He juxtaposes icy silver with the warm glow of gold, calm green emeralds with vivid red rubies, complimented with the fresh hue of white pearls. Each of his design portrays a slice of life, a perspective of the rhythm and poetry of the world in which we all live.

Maker Profile of Claudio Pino - Photos by Arkan Zakharov

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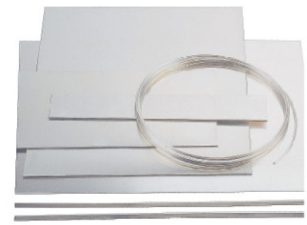

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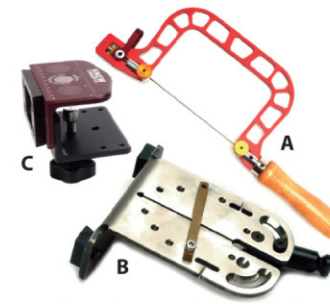

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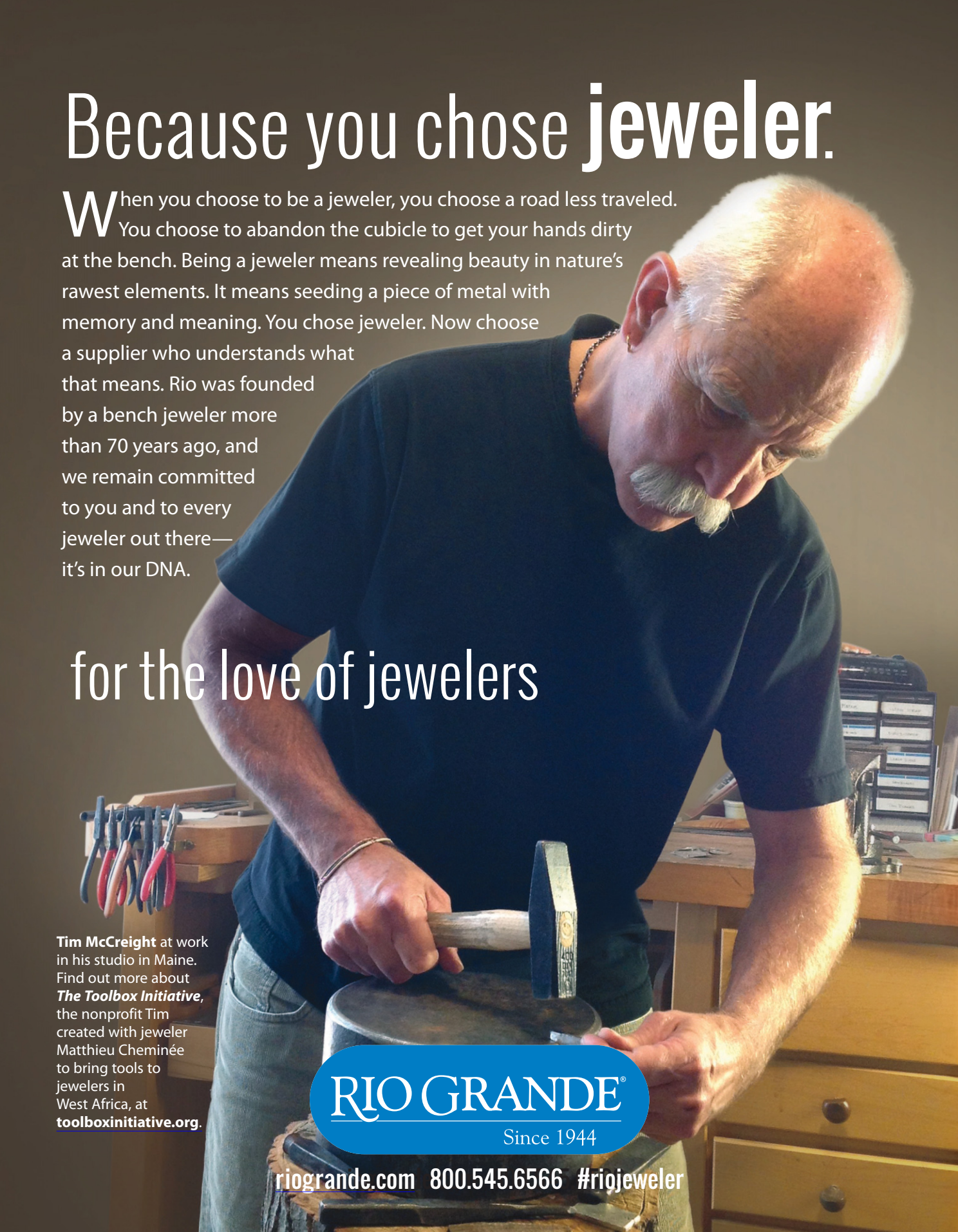

Tim McCreight at work in his studio in Maine. Find out more about ***The Toolbox Initiative***, the nonprofit Tim created with jeweler Matthieu Cheminée to bring tools to jewelers in West Africa, at **toolboxinitiative.org**.

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